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THE AUSTRALIAN PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE CD ROM

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3Dfx Voodoo 2

Gaming's great leap forward

QUAKE 2

**Inside the Technology
+ The Winner's Playguide**

ULTIMA ONLINE

World's First MEGApayer Game

STARCRRAFT

Our Beta-Testing Verdict

16 DEMOS ON THE CD:

including

QUAKE 2

Falcon 4.0
Speed Rally
Wing Commander Prophecy

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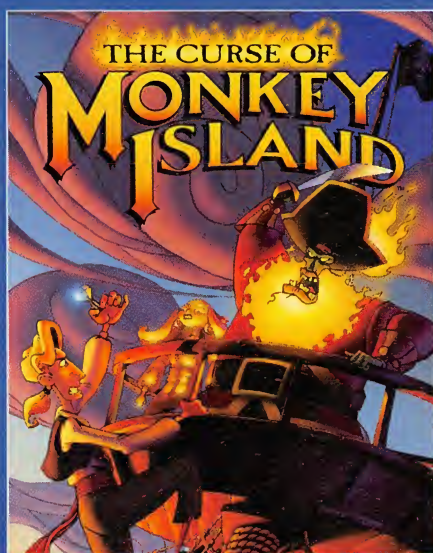
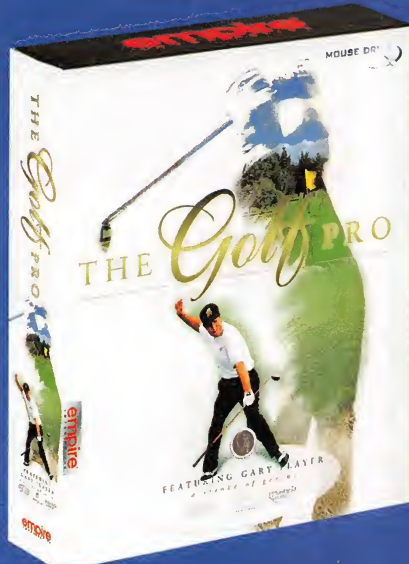
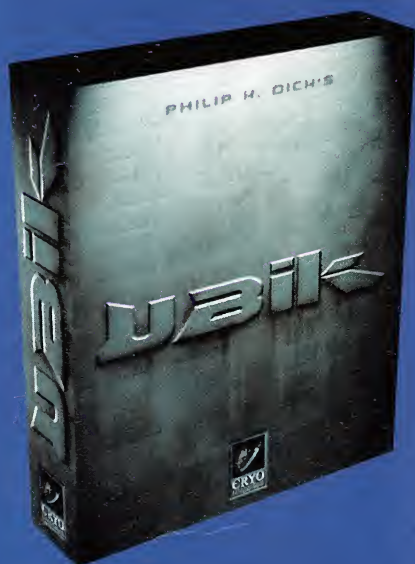
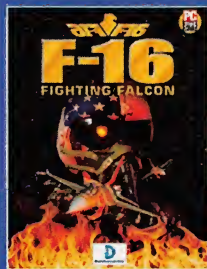
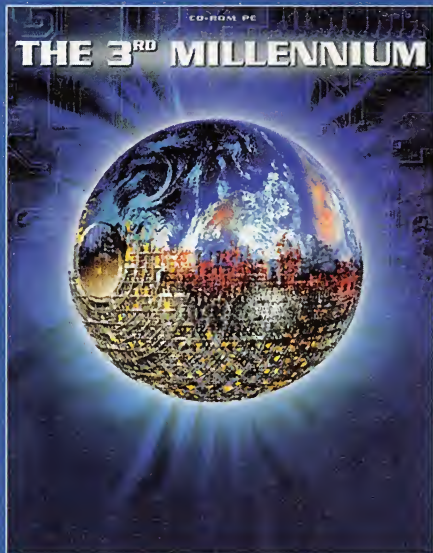
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gaming



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the hot hits from





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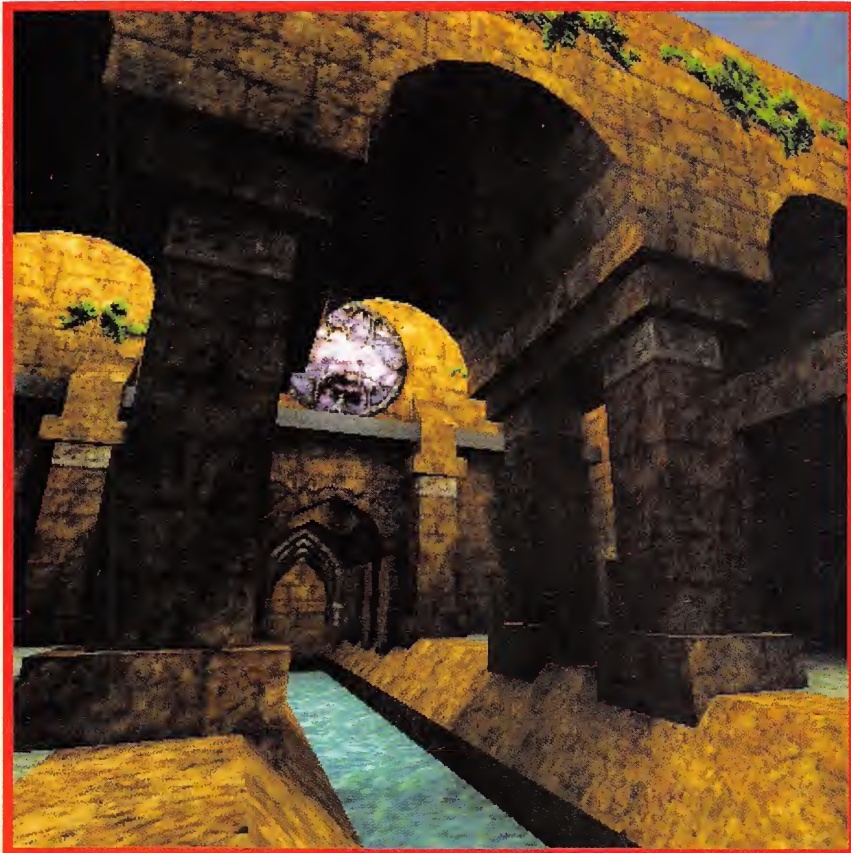
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What we're playing: I-War, TOCA Tourers, Quake 2, Total
 Annihilation, FIFA 98, CM 2, Mario 64, Spice Girls Quake
 Mod, Riven (just kidding!), Tomb Raider II (still kidding),
 Final Fantasy VII

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Editorial



The arrival of Quake 2 signalled the end of just about everything else (other games, a social life, personal hygiene) for at least 6 months, as well as being another great leap forward to Upgrade Time for those with non-meaty PCs.

Watching the phenomenon blossom is intriguing, though plotting its course is a no brainer. As expected, the online community swung into action from the outset. The existing 7.8 million or so Quake fan/news sites embraced the second coming with gusto, providing up-to-the-minute news and downloads. The hackers didn't waste a second either, within

days there was a healthy choice of mods and utilities for those wanting more than the experience id intended. The most disturbing trend was the steadfast determination by many to turn Quake 2 back into Quake. Hacks like speeding-up rockets, and returning the weapons to the center of the screen instead of the new right-handed way introduced by id. Hello? These folks, and the majority of hardcore deathmatch players have missed out on a precious and fundamental aspect of Quake 2 - the single player game. Sure, it's their \$89.95 and they can do with their game as they wish - indeed the hackability is just as precious and fundamental a part as the single player game, but by racing around in deathmatch, inside game levels unpopulated by monsters, they're learning the levels in perfect detail and safety, with any hope of a meaningful single player game forever lost.

I'm a certified deathmatch addict, I've now thoroughly mutated Quake 2 and am always on the lookout for new and funky ways to do so, but when I got my Quake 2 I disconnected myself from the world and played it through to the finish. I'm so glad I did. It was one of the deepest, richest single player gaming experiences I've had the pleasure of enjoying.

The same goes for both Total Annihilation and Dark Reign, two games with a brilliant single player design and I'm the only person I know who has played them through. Most Deathmatchers' give the first mission or two a whirl for a quick familiarisation, then it's online and away.

A weekend and maybe a week of evenings is all you need to play most games through. Discover the hidden joy of it all! This community service message was brought to you after I'd been told by for about the 100th time: "Nah, I don't bother, I only deathmatch". Whoa, Dude, you're too cool for me...

Ben

**Makron: the boss in SINGLE
 PLAYER Quake 2. This guy
 doesn't complain about lag,
 rocket launchers being too
 slow etc...**



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Adelaide strengthens its reputation as the center of Australian games development, the elite international developers team up, Multiplay revamps its pricing and access, mergers and buyouts galore, big new Quake tourney and loads more.

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There are many fine reasons why subscribing is a top thing to do. This month we've got a pretty irresistible motivation - you could win a magnificent 20 inch Sony Trinitron monitor. "Honey, where's the cheque book?"

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All the latest on the game that's the greatest. We'll be running this page for a couple of months, or until we/you get bored with it.

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"Tis the devil's own work! No machine of such power could be of earthly origin." We built the FASTEST, BESTEST, GAME PC IN THE WORLD. Because we're braindead fools we're going to give it away. Wow, eh?

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Don't be intimidated by the most incredible game world ever, instead read our Tour Guide and jump in with the confidence only a PCPP reader can possess.

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The original 'Quake Killer'. Having lost that title, somewhat embarrassingly to Quake 2, Unreal is nearly upon us. Feast on our special preview and prepare...

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Is there any other game on the minds of RTS fans? PC PowerPlay's Peter Sharpe made his mark on the recent online beta test, here's his special report on the big one from Blizzard.

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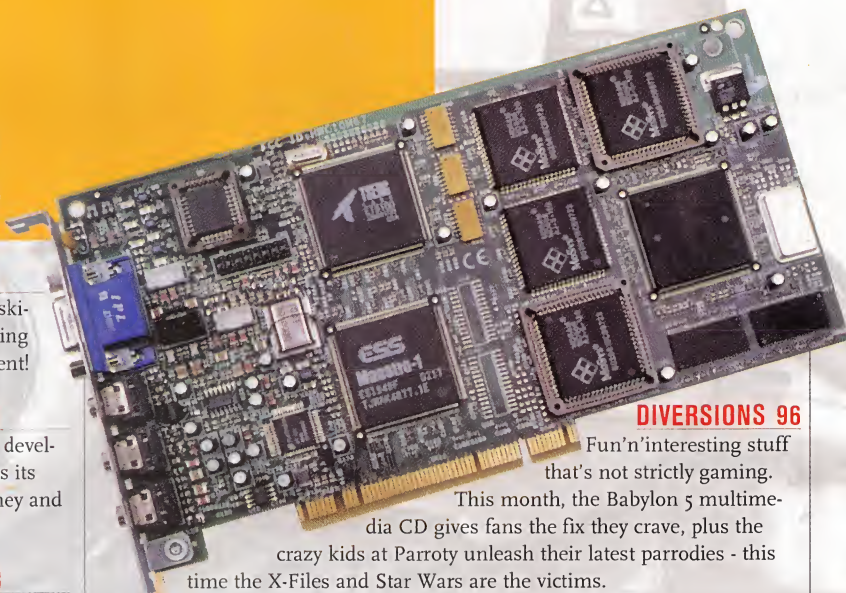
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Running around those gorgeous levels with a bunch of international chums on the net... It's too easy to take it all for granted. We examine the miracles of technology that make it all possible.

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Archon! Archon! Oh yes! Like Battletchess, but really really cool.



CD GUIDE

CD Tech

Win 95

Running the Powerplay CD under Win 95 is best. All the games will appear on the menu and run, whether Win 95 or DOS.

CLICK ON THE POWERWIN ICON

DOS

Around half the games are DOS. The Powerplay DOS menu will only show DOS games

TYPE PCPOWER AT THE CD PROMPT (PROBABLY D:)

Win 3.1x

Some games will run under Win3.1x. The Powerplay menu won't work under Win3.1x, so run them straight from the CD with File Manager

RUN STRAIGHT FROM CD

16 DEMOS

WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S COVER CD. PROBABLY THE MOST AMAZING THING YOU WILL DISCOVER ABOUT THIS MONTH'S COVER CD IS THE INCLUSION OF THE FALCON 4.0 DEMO. ALTHOUGH THE DEMO DOESN'T MEAN THAT THE RELEASE IS NEAR, IT DOES AT LEAST OFFER HOPE, OR SOMETHING TO PLAY WITH UNTIL THE NOW SLIGHTLY LESS ELUSIVE RELEASE IS ACTUALLY AVAILABLE.

Making it work: Plan B and C

REMEMBER, EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THE COVER CD WILL WORK ON AS WIDE A VARIETY OF MACHINES AS POSSIBLE, BUT IF YOU TRY A GAME, AND IT RUNS OFF THE CD TOO SLOWLY, OR SOUND DOESN'T WORK ETC. TRY USING THE INSTALL FUNCTION TO COPY IT TO YOUR HARD DRIVE OR IN THE EVENT OF THERE NOT BEING AN INSTALL FUNCTION, COPY THE DIRECTORY AS PER THE FOLLOWING.

IF THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS AND THE INSTALL PROCEDURE FAILS, NOTE THE TITLE OF EACH GAME IN THIS GUIDE. THE 3RD LINE LISTS THE DIRECTORY THE GAME IS LOCATED ON THE CD. JUST COPY THE DIRECTORY OFF OF YOUR HARD DRIVE TO THE CD, AND RUN THE EXECUTABLE MANUALLY.



Quake 2 Test

ID Software

Win 95 Action

\games\win95\q2test

If you don't know what Quake 2 is then you must be an alien from a damn ways away. Even the grays (our resident conspiratorial aliens) know of Quake 2 and play it regularly. As there is no official Quake 2 demo available as yet, we have included the test version released by id software last year. It's still a ton of fun but not an indicator of the final product which is vastly different.

System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a joystick/Gamepad. This game supports the 3Dfx, Power VR and OpenGL.

Falcon 4.0 demo

Microprose

Win 95 Flight combat Sim

\games\win95\f4demo

You could be forgiven for thinking that Falcon 4 would never be released, this most delayed of all software titles has been vaporware for so long now that, well, who can remember? This demo then is more than just a technology test, it's a sign, a semblance of hope that Falcon 4 might actually be close to release. Until then however, this demo should be enough to tide you over until the release, it features unlimited flight time with the option of full realism against a host of airborne and ground targets.

System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick/Gamepad

+ (plus) = Increase thrust

- (minus) = Decrease thrust

Shift-Minus = Full afterburner

W = Wheel brakes

Ctrl-E = Eject

A = Autopilot

G = Gear

H = Toggle pitch ladder

Ctrl-H = Toggle HUD scales

from analog to digital

Alt-H = Change HUD color

Z = Flares

X = Chaff

B = Toggle speed brakes

Shift-B = Open speed brakes

Ctrl-B = Close speed brakes

N = Set previous steerpoint

M = Set next steerpoint

Weapon keys

Backspace = Cycle air-to-ground weapons

**** (backslash) = Fire control com-



puter submodes

Shift-I = Fire control computer master modes

Enter = Cycle air-to-air weapons

C = Cancel missile mode

Alt-J = Jettison selected weapon

D = Toggle Dogfight mode

V = Toggle MRM mode

Spacebar = Fire weapon

MFD (Multifunction Display) keys

[= Cycle left MFD

] = Cycle right MFD

Shift-I = Display upper left MFD

Shift-J = Display upper right MFD

MFD

Ctrl-I = Display lower left MFD

Ctrl-J = Display lower right MFD

' (apostrophe) = Toggle SMS (Stores Management System) page or EO (Electro Optical) for Maverick

Radar Keys

F1 = Cycle radar air-to-air modes

F2 = Cycle radar air-to-ground modes

F3 = Decrease radar range

Shift-F3 = Decrease radar gain

F4 = Increase radar range

Shift-F4 = Increase radar gain

F5 = Tilt radar antenna down

F6 = Center radar antenna

F7 = Tilt radar antenna up

F8 = Cycle radar submodes

Shift-F8 = Change radar bar scans

F9 = Ground Map radar field of view

< = Lock previous target in Easy and Simplified radar modes

. (period) = Lock next target in Easy and Simplified radar modes

/ = Lock target on nose in Easy and Simplified radar modes



Up arrow = Move cursor up

Left arrow = Move cursor left

Down arrow = Move cursor down

Right arrow = Move cursor right

o on keypad = Designate target

. on keypad = Radar return to search

View Keys

` (accent) = No cockpit view

1 on top row = Front cockpit view

2 on top row = Virtual cockpit view

3 on top row = Padlock view

4 on top row = Extended FOV

(field of view) view

5 on top row = Chase view

6 on top row = External view

Y = Toggle narrow FOV

U = Lower left cockpit

I = Lower cockpit

O = Lower right cockpit

Insert = 10 o'clock view

Home = 50/50 view

Shift-Home = HUD view

PageUp = 2 o'clock view

Delete = 9 o'clock view

End = 4 o'clock view

Shift-End = 8 o'clock view

PageDown = 3 o'clock view

7 on numeric keypad = Zoom out

1 on numeric keypad = Zoom in

8 on numeric keypad = Pan view up

4 on numeric keypad = Pan view left

6 on numeric keypad = Pan view right

2 on keypad = Pan view down

+ on keypad = Track previous plane

- on keypad = Track next plane

3 on keypad = Glance backward

Enter on keypad = Glance forward

Command keys

Shift-Q = AWACS command

Shift-S = Tanker command

Miscellaneous Keys

PrintScrn = Screen shot

P = Pause

Ctrl-L = Toggle labels



Agent Armstrong rolling demo

Virgin Interactive
Dos Action

\games\dos\agentarm
Although there are no gameplay or in game shots, this animation from Agent Armstrong does offer an insight into the production standards that are being taken with this title.

System requirements: Pentium 75, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

Archimedean Dynasty demo

with 3Dfx support - Blue Byte
Dos Action

\games\dos\agentarm
With the 3Dfx patch finally completed, this re-released version with 3Dfx support looks infinitely better. Take to your underwater fighting vessel and propel around the ocean bed dogfighting with enemy subs. Just like fighting in space, only much wetter.

System requirements:
486 DX4/100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick/Gamepad. This game supports the 3Dfx

Andretti Racing demo

Electronic Arts
Win 95 Racing

\games\win95\ardemo
Acclaimed by many as "the best 3D racing title yet." This demo features two complete tracks (a tricky oval and a super-challenging road course), five driving views, instant replay, compre-

hensive car setups, and more so you can judge for yourself. System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick/ Gamepad. This games supports the 3Dfx

KEYBOARD
Accelerate A
Brake Z
Steer left/right
Change view V
Look G/J
Look behind H
Shift Up/Down W/Q
Pause P
GAMEPAD PRO
Accelerate Button 2
Brake Button 1
Steer D-Pad
Change view Button 4
Look Button 5/6
Look behind Button 3
Shift Up/Down Button 7/8
Pause START
THRUSTMASTER
Accelerate Gas Pedal
Brake Brake Pedal
Steer Steering Wheel
Change view Button 3
Look -
Look behind Button 4
Shift Up/Down Button 2/1
Pause Keyboard "P"
IN THE PITS (KEYBOARD)
Highlight service = Arrow Keys up/down
Check/Cancel fuel and tires = ENTER
Decrease/Increase downforce = Arrow Keys left/right



F-22 Raptor Demo

Novalogic

Win 95 Flight combat Sim

\games\win95\f22demo

Like I-War, and very in character with Novalogic thinking, is that F-22 doesn't offer any form of 3D acceleration. This isn't necessarily a bad thing though. Although not looking as good, F-22 moves with a speed to match an accelerated PC. The most important factor however, the gameplay is definitely not missing from F-22.

System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This game supports a Joystick/ Gamepad

Pressing the "?" key in the game will bring up the Raptor Keyboard Help Screen showing you the keys required to play the game.

Final Liberation demo

SSI

Win 95 Turn based strategy

\games\win95\fldemo

Final Liberation is a turn-based

strategy game of epic proportions chronicling a monumental struggle for survival in the distant future. With humanity's spread throughout the stars going unnoticed apathy has lead to a surprise invasion. The planet Volistad has been invaded by Orks who are attempting to crush the last of the humans - and claim the world as their own.

System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

Frogger demo

Hasbro

Win 95 Arcade

\games\win95\frogdemo

Remember Frogger from the days way back when arcade games were innovative? Well, he's back, this time though, he's armed with all new moves such as power croak, heat-seeking tongue and super jump! In full 3D, you now have to navigate obstacles such as polluted ponds, hostile deserts, dark caves and outsmart new enemies such as crocodiles, lawnmowers, snakes and birds. Frog you. (I saw that in an ad and just had to say it!)

System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

This game supports the 3Dfx (through Glide)

Lands of Lore 2 Rolling Demo

Virgin Interactive

Win 95

\games\win95\lol2roll

This rolling demo will give you an idea of the quality of Lands of Lore 2.

System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

Pure Vex demo

NEC

Win 95

\games\win95\pvrdemo

If you own a Power VR then here's another Power SGL product to upset your 3Dfx-loving friends with. Pure Vex is a straight arcade shoot-em-up except with playability that rivals even the arcade machines. Richly detailed and colourful graphics, multiple 3D views and brilliant playability make Pure Vex an awesome demo.



System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a joystick/Gamepad. This game is for the Power VR (Power SGL) only.

Sabre Ace demo

Virgin Interactive

Win 95 Flight combat Sim

\games\win95\sabace

This is your chance. be a fighter pilot during one of the most exciting eras in aerial combat - The Korean War. Jump into battle in your F-86 Sabre jet or choose from 4 other authentic planes - the F-51 Mustang, the F-80 Shooting Star, the MiG-15 or the YAK-9. Looks fantastic on the 3Dfx.

System requirements: Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a joystick/Gamepad. This game supports the 3Dfx, Direct 3D.

F1 = Cockpit

F2 = Chase

F3 = Right Wing

F4 = Nose

F5 = Left Wing

F6 = Top down/Bungie Cam

INTERNAL VIEWS

Home = Cockpit View

End = Auxiliary Instrument Panel

Pg Up = Right View Kneeboard

M/Pg Down = Right View Map

KP-1 = Left Rear View

KP-2 = Rear View

KP-3 = Right Rear View

KP-4 = Left Forward View

KP-5 = Forward View

KP-6 = Right Forward View

KP-7 = Left Forward Up View

KP-8 = Forward Up (45 degrees) View

KP-9 = Right Forward Up View

KP-/ = Straight up (90 degrees) View

SHFT-1 = Left Echelon

SHFT-2 = Right Echelon

SHFT-3 = Trail

SHFT-4 = Flight Right Echelon

SHFT-5 = Flight Left Echelon

SHFT-6 = FAD level 1 (least)

SHFT-7 = FAD level 2

SHFT-8 = FAD level 3

SHFT-9 = FAD level 4 (most)

SHFT-Q = Quit to Menus

SHFT-E = Eject

SHFT-R = Arm Rockets

SHFT-T = Arm Tanks

SHFT-I = View other aircraft

SHFT-P = End parachute

sequence

SHFT-S = Toggle sound on/off

SHFT-F = Raise flaps

SHFT-G = Raise gear

SHFT-H = Time compress

SHFT-J = Toggle jettison switch

SHFT-L = Designate New Leader

F-22 Raptor



1 = 10% Power

2 = 20% Power

3 = 30% Power

4 = 40% Power

5 = 50% Power

6 = 60% Power

7 = 70% Power

8 = 80% Power

9 = 90% Power

0 = 100% Power

- = Decrease Power

+ = Increase Power

BKSP = Bomb/Tank Release

(must be armed)

R = Reload (Multiplayer)

I = GCI Friend/Foe Select

O = External View Instruments on/off

P = Pause (toggle)

A = Auto-pilot (disables FAD)

S = Weapon Sight Selector

(guns/rockets/bombs)

D = ADF/GCI Selector

F = Lower flaps

G = Lower gear

J = Jettison External Stores (this will jettison all stores, you must arm rockets/bombs/tanks to drop specific)

K = Toggle True/Indicated

Airspeed (default is true)

L = Return to Assigned Leader

Z = ZAP Request (you cannot ZAP when engaged in cockpit or you are damaged)

X = Target Lock on/off

C = Canopy open/close

V = FAD on/off

B = Brake Speed/Wheel (toggle)

N = Next Target (GCI)

M = Map (toggle)

ENTER = Fire Guns/Rockets

, = ADF Channel (Left)

. = ADF Channel (Right)

ESC = Exit game

Sabre Ace



Space Empires 3 demo

Malfador Machinations

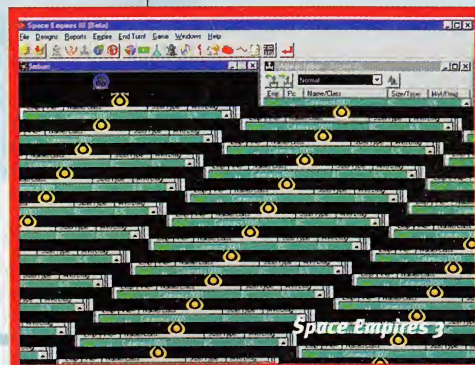
Win 95 Real Time Strategy

\games\win95\se3demo

It's the dawn of a new age of exploration and your race has discovered a way to pass through the fabric of space and move to other solar systems beyond your own. Surprise, surprise, you discover that the galaxy is alive with movement and colonisation. Will you coexist with the other races, or do you feel the galaxy yours to do with as you please? Design starships, build them and send them into the icy void of

space. Explore new solar systems, colonize strange alien worlds, and build an industrial complex to feed your empire. Research vital new technologies, perform intelligence operations on your neighbours, and play the delicate game of political intrigue.

System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.



Wing Commander Prophecy



Tone Rebellion rolling demo

Virgin Interactive
Win 95 Real Time Strategy
\\games\\win95\\tonereb
An interesting rolling demo that highlights the play elements of Tone Rebellion.
System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.

Wing Commander Prophecy demo

Origin
Win 95 Action
\\games\\win95\\wcp
This is the complete demo for Wing Commander prophecy supporting a host of 3D cards. The demo is a must try if you are a fan of the previous titles. Not because of how good it is, but because it highlights the criticism that Wing Commander prophecy is receiving, that it's the same game with prettier graphics. But oh how pretty those graphics are.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick/Gamepad. This game supports the 3Dfx, Direct 3D.

Direct keys = move ship

Q = Roll left

W = Roll right

TAB = Afterburner

~ = Afterburn toggle

+ = Increase throttle

- = Decrease throttle

1 = Full speed

BKSP = Full stop

A = Autopilot

N = Display current NAV toggle

Wing Commander Prophecy



(in combat)
[CTRL][E] = Eject
G = Cycle through available guns
F = Select "Full Guns"
SPACE = Fire guns
M = Cycle missiles

ENTER = Fire missiles

T = Cycle targets (SHIFT cycles backward)

[CTRL][G] = Sync guns

L = Lock target

[CTRL][T] = Smart targeting

U = Target nearest enemy

Y = Match target speed

I = Target under reticle

R = Target next component (capital ships only)

E = Drop decoy

[CTRL][O] = View Mission Objectives

[CTRL][M] = View Message Log

C = Communications VDU (press 1-6 to send message)

D = Damage VDU

P = Power VDU (hold and adjust settings with pointer)

S = Adjust shields

[CTRL][F4] = Rear camera VDU

[CTRL][F8] = Missile camera VDU

[CTRL][N] = Enter nav map

Direction keys = Rotate map

[,] = Zoom in/out

Primary Click = View target (or action sphere/nav point)

Secondary Click = Select target (or action sphere/nav point)

T = Cycle targets

N = Cycle next nav

P = Cycle prev nav

C = Center view on current target

S = Toggle starfield

Z = Zoom in/out

G = Toggle grid

ESC = Escape nav map

F1 = Front view

F2 = Left view

F3 = Right view

F4 = Rear view

[CTRL-F4] = Rear cam VDU

F5 = Chase camera

F6 = Object camera (cycle)

[SHIFT] = Rotate camera around current object

[=] = Zoom in on current object

[>] = Zoom out on current object

F7 = Ship POV camera (cycle)

F8 = Missile camera toggle

[CTRL-F8] = Missile cam VDU

F9 = Victim camera toggle

F10 = Fly-by camera (again resets)

F11 = Drop camera (again resets)

F12 = Target track camera (cycle)

[ALT][A] = Attack my target

[ALT][B] = Break and attack

[ALT][F] = Form on my wing.

[ALT][H] = Help me out

[ALT][D] = Request status

[ALT][T] = Taunt target

[ALT][M] = Maintain radio silence

[ALT][L] = Lift radio silence

Speed Rally demo

Virgin Interactive

Dos Racing

*installed to CD root.

If you enjoyed the Screamer series of games then you will love Speed Rally, it's Screamer 3. Not a driving sim here, (hooray), but a fun all out rally race around a series of tracks set around the world. Pure zippy fun.

System requirements: Pentium

133, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game supports a Joystick/
Gamepad. This game supports
the 3Dfx, Direct 3D.

Utilities

CD Alarm

This is the APK Cd-Rom Alarm Clock. It is designed to wake you in the mornings (or at night if you are among the NightShift Vampire Peoples of the world). The programmer of this neat little app could not stand waking up to alarm buzzers and bells, so designed this to assist getting up in the A.M. With a good cup of coffee and some good music to listen to, it'll start your day off right!

Vulcan Notes

Vulcan Notes 95 brings you one step closer to the paperless office/home by letting you create up to 100 virtual "sticky notes" on your screen. Features include rich-text editing, alarms for each note with repeat settings and finding/replacing of floating notes. It's fast, handy and simple to use.

Dos Tweak

Dos Tweak is a utility that allows you to tune how Win95 boots up and from where it boots up as well. It essentially allows you to modify all the msdos.sys file settings to have greater control on Win95 at bootup from the DOS level.

City Calculator

The city distance calculator with over 1900 cities worldwide allows you to calculate in Kilometers, Miles and Nautical Miles the distance between cities. The results can be saved as either text, bitmap files or set as the Windows wallpaper.

MPEG AV Player

This MPEG Player besides being able to play MPG, VCD, or other movie file formats (such as DAT, AVI, MOV, FLI, FLC) has one main feature. It can capture the input files frames and save them as BMP's while playing, or entire MPG chunks allowing you to cut favorite parts or whole MPEG tracks to hard disk.

Patches

BC3K Aus release to version D7
Orchid Righteous 3Dfx Drivers to 3.01
BC3K 2Mb Manual
BC3K 3Dfx demo
Age of Empires to V1.0a
Close Combat 2 Patch.

DOS TROUBLESHOOTING

The most likely cause of any problem is a shortage of conventional memory. This has nothing to do with how much RAM is on your system, but how it's set up. To find out how much is available for the games, type MEM /C \MORE. Look for a line that reads LARGEST EXECUTABLE PROGRAM SIZE, if it's over 550k then everything should run. If it's under that figure, you'll need to edit your system files to sort it out.

The easiest way is to use the MAKE BOOT DISK facility found on most game installation menus. If you'd prefer not to do that, then you'll need to manually edit your two configuration files - the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

To do so, type EDIT CONFIG.SYS and EDIT AUTOEXEC.BAT. In the CONFIG.SYS file, the most likely culprit is EMM386.EXE. You don't need it for the majority of games, so put REM at the start of the line. This will disable it. In the AUTOEXEC.BAT look to see if you are running SMARTDRV, if it's there, put REM at the start.

These two simple measures should overcome most problems. If you're still running short on conventional memory (the game should give you an error message telling you how much more you need), then a boot disk is the best solution.

THE PC POWERPLAY CD - The games

on the CD are designed to be run in different ways. Some can be run straight from the disc, while others need to be installed. Games requiring installation will usually prompt you with a choice of where it will install to, so take note!

Many of the games which run from the CD will only produce sound effects if you have a Sound Blaster compatible sound card set to default settings. That's 99% of you, so if you get no sound you're best copying the game to your hard drive, then running the setup program - usually INSTALL, SETUP, CONFIG or SOUNDSET. As with all problems PC, trial and error is the only true solution. Feel free to copy an entire game to your hard drive. Also copy a game from the CD if it mysteriously refuses to install. Then run the INSTALL file from the hard drive.

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Gasp! Could we, with our clever visual analogy of an empty glass, be inferring that Jolt has a lot of caffeine? Could we possibly be proud of this fact? If this day and age of political correctness? Damn straight baby.



<http://www.joltcola.com>

a carbonated sip in the face

sidelines

The original retail release was only a few scant months ago, but there's a host of mods, TC's, skins, and just about everything possible to do with Quake 2 already in the works by third party developers and enterprising fans. Id themselves are no different - they're going to be publishing the official mission pack which is being developed by Xatrix (who were responsible for Redneck Rampage), and it is expected sometime soon. Id have always been in favour of third party developers doing whatever they wanted with their games, but Paul Steed recently became a little hot under the collar when he found out that there were a few people who had set about using the Q2 engine simply to recreate Quake, with the inherent problems like faster rockets, faster rockets, faster rockets, and so on. As expressive as his outburst was, we're inclined to agree with him on this point. You go boy!

Increasingly, game development companies are starting to use 'real people' as opposed to paid professionals to test out beta versions of their games. Take the interest from the tens of thousands of punters who wanted in on the Starcraft beta test, or those who took part in the UO beta test. The situation seems different for OS developers though, with Microsoft recently announcing that they are entering into the beta period for Windows '98, and that the public will have the opportunity to join in the testing. Well, they'll have to pay US\$30 for the privilege of using what's going to be a very buggy and unstable OS, and that money isn't going to go towards the purchase of the final version either. But what would you expect from a company like Microsoft? If you're feeling like a patsy, then head over the www.microsoft.com for more details.

3Dfx correction: The Cardex Dragon 1000 was the winner of our 3Dfx category "Ultimate Hardware" in the Hot Hardware Guide because its price for performance ratio is spot on. It has the fastest memory on board, 35ns, then any 3Dfx card tested and its performance is second only to the winner by a margin of 0.04%. At the time of publication there were unqualified speculations that the Dragon card's 3Dfx CPU was being over-clocked to 66Mhz and that under those conditions it was suggested that card may require a cooling fan. We would like to make it clear that this assumption was incorrect and that the card does not require any additional cooling aids. The bottom line is, the Dragon 1000 card gives the best performance at the best price and is truly hassle free.

GDD is alive and well and living in Texas

Ever since computer games started making decent amounts of money, there have been rumblings from the developers themselves about how the increasingly large and increasingly market driven publishing companies are conducting their business. One of the more outspoken critics of the existing process, Mike Wilson (ex-id software and Ion Storm), has taken the big step and created a publishing company/co-operative that he feels will fill the void between developers and publishers, and in his usual style has chosen to name it G.O.D..

It's actually short for Gathering Of Developers, but the audacious name bespeaks the audacious nature of the company. Their mission statement is "to be the worldwide leader in the development and delivery of commercially successful computer game

software designed for a range of platforms". Wilson has grouped together a bunch of very important, experienced and influential people from the games industry for assessment of projects, and also for ongoing support to developers. The list of the bigwigs reads like a veritable who's who, including Scott Miller (3D Realms), Jay Wilbur (Epic MegaGames), Brett Combs (Terminal Reality), and Harry Miller (Ritual Entertainment), along with a host of others not so well known, but still with plenty of experience under their belts. They aren't in this purely to make money either (though if the venture is a success they will be laughing all the way to the bank), in fact the developers have been promised substantial increases in returns from sales of their game. On top of this, G.O.D. is looking



at housing development studios for developers to make use of for sound recording, motion capture, accounting services, game testing, and so on. They've billed themselves as 'by the developers, for the developers', and though it may sound a little too good to be true to our cynical ears, if the venture is a success then it's the gamers that will reap the rewards along with the developers, so here's hoping!

GT supports emerging Australian developer

You might not have heard of them before, but Emergent Software have gained the attention of one of the largest game publishers in the world, GT Interactive. Why such attention for a fledgling and little heard of company? Well, it has a lot to do with their upcoming title, 'Powerslide' which turned quite a few heads when it was previewed at E3 last year - it's an off road racer using an extremely fast proprietary graphics engine (named "The Difference"), some very accurate physics modelling techniques, and what looks to be plenty of exciting gameplay.

Though Emergent might seem to have exploded on to the scene, they've actually been hard at work for around 4 years, and have been working on Powerslide for well over a year. And it's no surprise that they're located in South Australia either, the SA Government seems to be getting right behind I.T. and games



Another Australian software developer turning heads with quality goods - Emergent Software and Powerslide

development companies in the area in terms of both funding and support - which is a damn good thing, we think. Still, the original members of Emergent, Greg Siegle and Richard Harrison self funded the company at first, though they now employ around 20 others and are always looking for more quality personnel, so if you're a skilled artist, programmer, or the like then give them a bell at emergent@webmedia.com.au.

Powerslide isn't expected until around Christmas this year, but seeing as GT saw fit to sign a deal for five titles with Emergent they had to be feeling pretty confident. Julian White, Managing Director of GT Interactive Software Australia said "GT Interactive Software Australia are very pleased to be working with one of the best developers in Australia...it demonstrates GT Interactive Software commitment to the local market, in not only in bringing high quality product from overseas into Australia but also taking some of the best Australian talent to the rest of the world". We'll keep you posted on how the game turns out, with a preview appearing in these pages soon.



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sidelines

Further proof that Playstations are dangerous toys. Paul Grasmanis, the defensive tackle from the Chicago Bears was recently found guilty of battery for 'choking and threatening to kill his wife' when she turned off his Playstation whilst he was in the middle of a game. Grasmanis refused to turn the volume down on his TV, at which point his wife took matters into her own hands and disconnected the power supply, resulting in the altercation. Nobody seems to know which game he was playing at the time (we're thinking Mortal Kombat or the like), but if he had a PC he probably would have been in a separate room and none of this would have happened, we think. Just one more reason why PCs are better than consoles....

Hyperactive is back, finally. After a couple of months of downtime for 'restructuring', the games site is now in the hands of Eddie 'Funky Trunk' Dawson and will once again be updated daily with all the latest games news, demos, cheats, and information for all games systems. Check out the updated version at www.hyperactive.com, and keep an eye out for Hyperactive 3.0, which is under development as we speak.

It might seem like an incredibly brave decision to develop a drag racing simulation, especially by a software house better known for their RPG's, but Bethesda Softworks are set to deliver 'Burnout' to the masses of game playing drag racing freaks out there - and there would have to be plenty of them about too. The bad news is that it's been put back from the initial release date to August of this year, but Bethesda promise that it's going to be worth waiting just a little bit longer for. What could be more fun than getting in an extremely chunky car and going really fast in a straight line for 5 seconds or so. Absolutely nothing!

Activision have obviously taken note of Westwood's 'strategy' when it comes to milking every last cent possible out of a game. Though Westwood are the kings of the add-on packs, Activision aren't far behind, and the latest of their mission packs is for Interstate '76. Dubbed 'I76 - Arsenal', it will comprise of the I76 - Nitro expansion pack and the I76 - Gold edition. The Nitro pack has 20 new missions, new multiplayer scenarios, as well as a few new cars and weapons to boot, while the Gold version is just the direct 3D version of the game with new terrain, optimised graphics, new difficulty levels, as well as a few other enhancements. Owners of the original version will be able to send in a rebate form to Activision to help cut the costs - though all the elements of the Gold version can be downloaded from Activision's download site if you choose.

Rage Software, not Eidos, are the publishers of the very fine fighting game Incoming, not Eidos as we stated in our CD Guide in PCPP # 21. Now you know.

ATI buys Tseng, sort of

Tseng Labs, manufacturers of the ET family of video cards, have long been held up as one of the best compromises between 2D performance and price - their ET6000 chip especially so. However, in monetary terms Tseng haven't been doing all that well of late, and have sold off their graphic design assets to ATI Technologies in an effort to raise some much needed cash. This doesn't mean that ATI have bought out Tseng Labs, Tseng will still be producing and marketing their hardware. However, ATI will receive equipment, tools and 'certain rights to intellectual property' along with around 40 members of Tseng's 3D graphics development team moving over to ATI Research inc, a subsidiary of ATI Technologies, and ATI have taken the Tseng's existing products will still be supported by Tseng, and they are "in discussion with various entities regarding ongoing rights to these products", whatever that means. Confusingly enough (no-one except the bean counters really understand these deals), Tseng's CEO has said that the deal will help with Tseng's "acquisition strategy" and that they will have around US\$30 million in liquid assets to fund the purchase of "growth companies in diverse industries".

Big Quake comp

There's still life in the original Quake, and if you think you've honed your DM skills to perfection, then it might be time put your money where your mouth is and enter the tournament run by the Australian Multiplayer Club. Plans are afoot for competitions in each capital city, but the heats for the next tournament will be in Sydney, on the 4th, 11th, 18th, and 19th of April. It'll cost you \$15 to enter, spectators are welcome, and as the event is sponsored by Activision, V2 records, and Dark Zone Media there will be plenty of prizes and giveaways for all. For more info, give Ben 'Nacho' Nicholson a call on 0414 611 618, email him at bnic@usa.net, or head over to the site at www2.hunterlink.net.au/~ddbcn

They liked it so much...

Creative Technologies have been on some kind of acquisitional rampage lately, with their recent acquisition of computer speaker manufacturers Cambridge Soundworks, and they have announced that they are taking over another company - this time around it's Ensoniq. Ensoniq have built a name for themselves as a producer of quality audio technologies, including samplers, keyboards and the like, though they also have substantial interests in the PC audio component field as well. Lately, Ensoniq have been moving into production of PCI audio cards with plenty of success, and this is one of the main areas that Creative were interested in it seems, along with Ensoniq's deal with large OEM's like Hewlett-Packard, DEC, and Gateway 2000 to supply them with Ensoniq audio products. Ensoniq will still make Ensoniq products, as well as support their existing products, and from the cash injection from the takeover are actually expected to have their newer technologies released earlier than otherwise expected. What we can expect to see however, is a greater level of commonality between Creative and Ensoniq products, especially in terms of Creative's multi-media packages, and their Sound Blaster Live! product lines.



TOP TEN GAMES

Rank	Title	Developer / Distributor
TW	LW	
1	1	TOMB RAIDER II CORE DESIGN-EIDOS / SEGA OZISOFT
2	2	AFL '98 EA SPORTS / ELECTRONIC ARTS
3	3	QUAKE II ID SOFTWARE / ROADSHOW
4	5	RIVEN BUNGIE-BRODERBUND / WOLF INTERACTIVE
5	4	BLADE RUNNER WESTWOOD - VIE / DIGITAL LEISURE
6	6	AGE OF EMPIRES MICROSOFT / VARIOUS
7	12	FIFA '98 EA SPORTS / ELECTRONIC ARTS
8	17	LINKS LS 98 ACCESS SOFTWARE / SEGA OZISOFT
9	11	HEAVY GEAR ACTIVISION / ROADSHOW
10	20	WING COMMANDER PROPHECY ORIGIN / ELECTRONIC ARTS

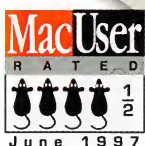
Week ending 18th January

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- Computer Gaming World



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Old Actor's Havens

What do actors do when they can't find leading roles anymore? They star in PC games, that's what. In this case James Woods and Lolita Davidovich will be guest voicing the main characters in *In of Light and Darkness* by Tribal Dreams, an Interplay design studio.

Now Davidovich, who has starred in such notable films as *Blaze*, has had a vision about the end of the world and Woods' character is it. So, she (you really since you are playing the game) must stop Woods, the Dark Lord of the Seventh Millennium.

Sue me! Sue you!

It's not enough being one of the biggest players in the PC distribution world; it's claimed in a lawsuit filed in New York City that GT Interactive lied in order to pump the price of its stock. The suit was filed by Kaufman Malchman Kirby & Squire who has turned the allegations into a class action lawsuit representing a number of stockholders.

The suit says that GT failed to use normal accounting standards and procedures and they artificially inflated their worth by "failing to properly expense research and development costs or royalty payments for software projects that had been terminated or failed to achieve technical feasibility." Huh? Well anyway, GT says they did count their beans within the law and they will vigorously defend themselves. That is sur-

prising because I thought they would own up to their indiscretions, like US President Bill Clinton does.

It's a scream



Chris Roberts, the legend behind the *Wing Commander* PC games says he's has cast the movie to be made based up the game *Wing Commander Prophecy*. According to the movie magazine *Variety*, Freddie Prinze Jr. (*I Know What You Did Last Summer*) plays Blair (Mark Hamill's role in the computer games) and Matthew Lillard (*Scream*) as Maniac (Tom Wilson in the game). Saffron Burrows (*Circle of Friends*) and Elise Neal (*Scream 2*) will also be starring in the film. And who is going to direct? Not Wes Craven nor Stanley Kubrick or anyone of the like. Roberts himself will direct.

And what is the story about? Well, according to *Variety*, our

Let go my Civilization



Microprose filed suit in California against Activision and Avalon Hill Game companies claiming the dastardly duo is trying to use Microprose's protected copyrights it holds for Sid Meier's *Civilization* and *Civilization*.

The suit claims false advertising, unfair competition, trademark infringement, and unfair business practices because of Activision's announcement of plans to develop and publish *Civilization* computer games under a purported licensing agreement with Avalon Hill. The lawsuit chal-

lenges Avalon Hill's ownership of trademark rights in the *Civilization* name and charges that Activision and Avalon Hill are wrongfully attempting to trade on the enormous goodwill and consumer recognition developed by MicroProse in the *Civilization* brand.

"By bringing this lawsuit, MicroProse is serving notice that it is determined to protect its *Civilization* brand and intellectual property", Microprose attorney Kip Welch.

Can't blame the cash strapped Microprose there. *Civilization* has sold over two million copies worldwide and is one of the top money producers among PC games.



heroes and heroines, with young, supple, lithe and well toned bodies, discover they are on a ship that has been rigged with an explosive that will destroy the universe. The \$27 million dollar film will be shot in Germany and released later this year.

What's in a name?

CUC, the parent company to Sierra Online and thus the grandpa to Blizzard, Papyrus,

and Impressions, among others, has finalized their merger with HFS, Inc., a deal with \$14 billion. The new company will be called Cendant. Wonder who they paid to come up with that one. The two companies had total sales of nearly \$5 billion dollars in 1996 and now they will be a mega-player in the world of travel, real estate, discount coupons, travel networks as well as software.

How Kind

Remember a few months ago when we brought you the story about Lord British being killed while online in *Ultima* by a rogue hacker? Well, the Lord was very very mad about that and kicked the hacker out of the game for life. Now, Lord British has decreed that if any other players are using hacked weapons, or duped as it is called, they too will be banished forever from *Ultima Online*. That is unless you fess up and dump your dupes. Check the Website for all the details.





Fly me

Mindscape, which is the company with loads of money but mostly crap games, have a few goodies in the pipeline and if it's flight sims you are into, but want a change, then go to the Mindscape Web site and look at the AVI files of SU 27 Flanker. The original Flanker, released 8 months ago, is tame and many thought it came across as too much as an application. Now with satellite imagery for the landscapes, more attention to the avionics and actual game-play, this is one to impress. With 8 months more development time from the Moscow based team, this is my pick of the most interesting flight sims to watch out for.



My Hot Tips

After the end of the year deluge of games, most software companies are still trying to unload some of their Christmas games, or even trying now to get those out that missed their deadlines even at this late stage.

Hit me

Talking to the developers and finding out what they are working on is the best approach and many, like Rage, have at least 5 games lined up for 98. Rage, who you may remember released Striker, have emerged from being a small development team to become one who has 4 offices in the UK with over 90 staff, and are at present setting up their own publishing label. One game of interest is Deadball Zone. Although conceived on the PSX it is also being coded, as we speak, on the PC. Futuristic



sports games do not go down that well on the PC but if you are a fan of Speedball and like soccer, the team have crafted a game that is exceedingly exciting. Having actually played it, I found

it a very pleasing experience. Forget about those heavy strategy games and put some light relief into the arena. The game even has shades of Aussie Rules football. Set in the future, you have 8 players per side. The player can kick,

barge and generally be tough as a nut, and on hand, can you believe, there are chainsaws and guns, but this ain't no gruesome, no holds barred, violent game for the sake of it, although watching the players chuck up is quite amusing. Play the game fairly with some neat combo passes and only using a few kicks if you are losing, and you will find this a great game. The pitch is surrounded by a force field so the ball is always in play. You can curve the ball and make some real nifty moves. Watch out for this one, a surprise hit may be in the making.

It's a Secret

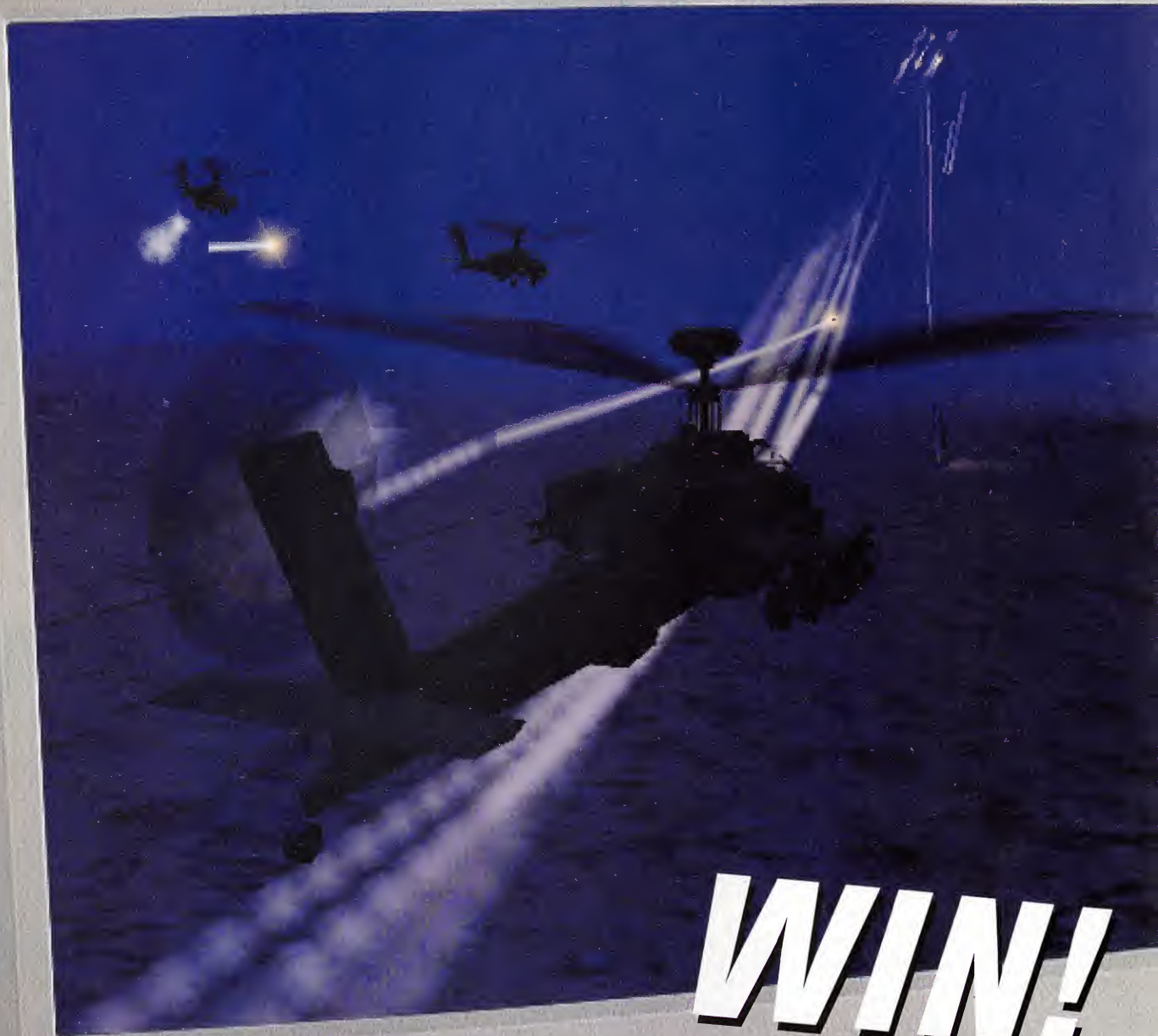
Not wanting to get into trouble with a certain console publisher that in the last year have started to release games on the PC - sure you know who I mean - it appears that they have realised that porting Sonic (oops) to the PC may not entice more than 10% of the market, so they have a really big simulation-come strategy game in the pipeline due this year. If you like Civilisation and Command & Conquer then you will just love this game being developed in the UK. Next month I will tell you all about this fabby game!



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QUAKE II NEWS by George Argy



Wowee! You thought Quake had spawned a ton of mods in its hey-day? The amount of enthusiasm for Quake 2 mods in such little time has been huge! Since its release way back in late '97, a never ending flow of ways to add replay value to the game has meant it's difficult to keep up, let alone try everything out. But being the genial kind of folk we are, here's a quick run-down of what's out and where to get it.

PATCHES AND UPDATES

If you haven't grabbed the Q2 3.10 patch yet, do it now! Most servers are running version 3.10 (the current version for Wintel PC's), which irons out some bugs and makes net play a more rewarding experience. Important note: this patch renders your single-player saved games useless so don't upgrade if you mostly play solo. Get it from <ftp://ftp.idsoftware.com/idstuff/quake2/q2-310.exe>.

Also due out 'soon', to quote iD, is the Quake 2 Point Release, which will fix most of the 150+ bugs in the game. Most notable is the lack of co-op play which may have lost itself in the millions of lines of code. Go to <http://www.planetquake.com> and follow the links to John Cash's plan for more info.

SKINS

I still remember the first time I jumped on to my favourite Quake server and almost choked on my McChicken as Big Red

Ron smiled and pumped a shell into my face. Quake 2 doesn't support downloadable server-side skins yet, but you can get skins from all over the shop to spice up your geeky LAN parties. Grab the new skin pack with over 100 new skins from <http://www.stomped.com>, chuck 'em in your quake2\baseq2\players\male or quake2\baseq2\players\female directory and you're away. Now if only someone could make a Hamburgler skin...

If you're feeling particularly creative and want to knock together your own, you'll need a graphics program like Paint Shop Pro (<http://www.jasc.com>), some Quake 2 palettes (http://www.bluesnews.com/files/quake2/misc/psp_q2_pal.zip) so all the colours look normal, and some good taste (URL unavailable). Go for it but remember, naked people running around with guns just isn't right :)

MODS

If you're game and want to really frigg around with your gamex86.dll file, there are heaps of mods to choose from. There's an excellent Battle of the Sexes mod at <http://www.quake2.com/spin-oza> where you can choose your sex and character class and play a variant of Capture the Flag. Try out the Monster-to-Player mod at <http://www.pbtech.com/~nuderaider/models.zip> where you can choose to look like one of the Strogg. Just like the X Wing vs Tie Fighter

equivalent, this only changes your appearance and not your abilities.

MULTIPLAY TOOLS

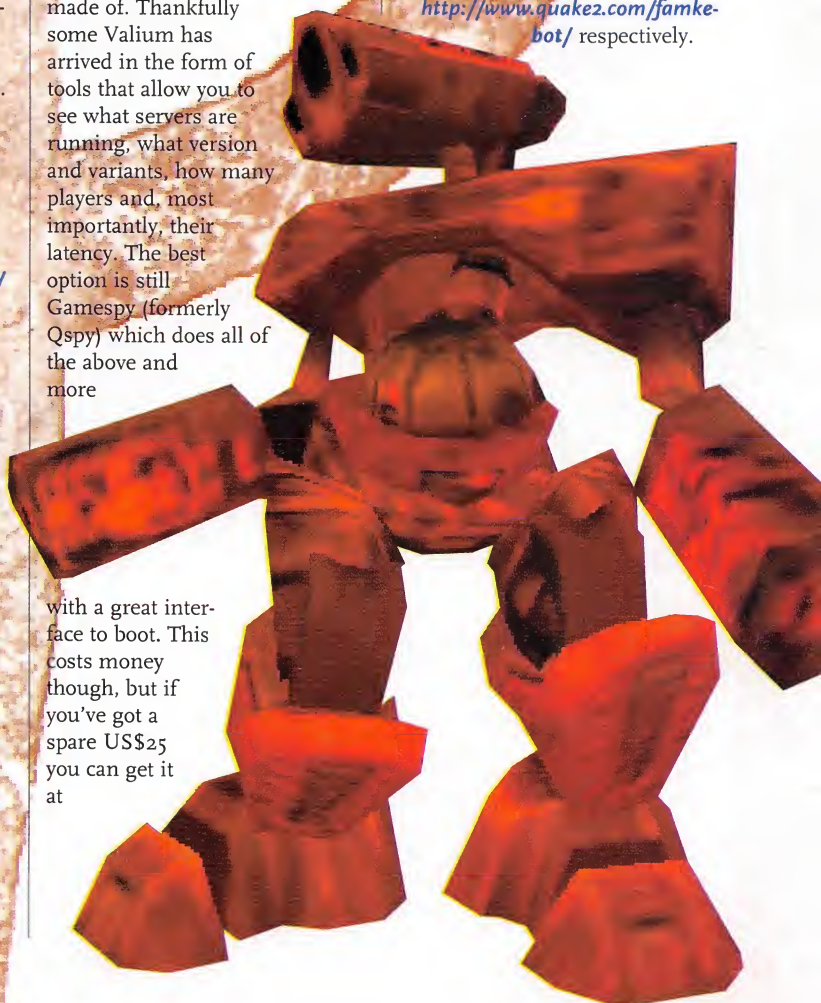
There is no doubt that playing Quake 2 online is the best way to spend every second of your waking life, but finding a decent server is the stuff nightmares are made of. Thankfully some Valium has arrived in the form of tools that allow you to see what servers are running, what version and variants, how many players and, most importantly, their latency. The best option is still Gamespy (formerly Qspy) which does all of the above and more

with a great interface to boot. This costs money though, but if you've got a spare US\$25 you can get it at

<http://www.gamespy.com>. A cheaper alternative is Pingtool or Gstat, both of which can do most things that Gamespy can do but will cost you US\$25 less. Grab them from <http://pingtool.tele-fragged.com> and <http://www.ews.uiuc.edu/~alevinsn/gstat.html>.

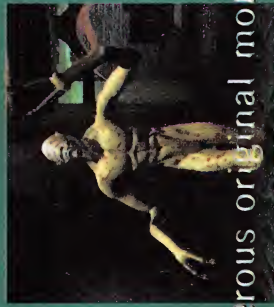
BUZZ, WHIRR, CLANG - BOOM!

OK, the AI in Quake 2 sucks only marginally less than its predecessor. This is where bots step in. Bots are artificially intelligent player characters that can do almost everything a human player would do. Quake 2 bots are becoming more advanced, but there's nothing as yet that compares to Steven Polge's legendary Reaper bot for Quake (he's now working on the AI for Unreal, in case ya didn't know). Four Q2 bots that are looking promising are the CR bot, Eraser, Oak II and Famke. Check out their growth and try out the betas at <http://www.planetquake.com/crbot/>, <http://impact.frag.com>, <http://www.quake2.com/oak> and <http://www.quake2.com/famke-bot/> respectively.





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COMPETITIONS

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close March 23, 1997

Entries to:

PC PowerPlay, 78 Renwick st.
Redfern NSW 2016



Uprising

What a surprise Uprising is. With little fanfare, Uprising has arrived on our hard drives and won't be going away for a while. The futuristic tank combat sim has knockout 3D graphics and innovative design, playing much like a 3D virtual RTS game.

Because they're tops, Directsoft have let us have 6 copies for this competition.

Q. What tank was the mainstay of the American ground forces during WWII?

Battlezone

Take a quiet moment to think back and remember Battlezone. The green wireframe graphics, the funny looking plastic periscope thing, the unbelievably repetitive gameplay... Yep, it was

a classic and we love it dearly.

So do Activision, it seems. Having picked up the rights to the name, they went about distilling the essence of all that was good and right about Battlezone, then funkified it with 90's technology. The end result is rather pleasing. We're sure you'll agree. Check it out for yourself, Activision have kindly provided 6 copies of Battlezone, because none of us here at PowerPlay have 6 friends we've decided to have a competition.

Q. What games company made the original arcade Battlezone?

TOCA Touring Car Championship

TOCA! TOCA! TOCA! We at PowerPlay are currently firmly of the belief that this is the best racing game ever. Sure, it doesn't



have the myriad of setup options like GP2, but TOCA feels real, sounds amazing and simply, is fantastic fun. The Touring cars are perfect for a computer game, racing is serious and a good line is important, but not critical. And you'll average a healthy number of major collisions each lap too! Fantastic! Sega Ozisoft let us have 5 very special copies, they're autographed by the legendary Cameron McConville, a genuine real-life racing driver.

Q. With which team did Ayrton Senna make his Formula 1 debut?

F22 Raptor

Nova Logic brought us the truly fabulous Comanche, as well as the marginally less that fabulous F-22 Lightning 2 about a year ago. It was a nice little sim, but was a little sparse on the graphics and feature fronts. Now Nova Logic have released F-22 Raptor. It's not a sequel, say Nova Logic, but it may as well be. Beautiful graphics and tons of missions built the light'n'easy way.

It's a fine game, very playable and looks a treat. EA sent 6 around for a comp. And here it is!

Q. What American Air Superiority fighter is the F-22 destined to replace?

Issue # 19 winners

MYTH COMP. (CORRECT ANSWER "MARATHON")

K Naughton, Jan Jul VIC
B Bate, Matraville NSW
W Underwood, New Town TAS
L Turnbull, Hoppers Crossing VIC
T Murdoch, Buxton NSW
C Martin, Petrie QLD

PUMA 98 COMP. ("1986")

C Kerr, Goulburn NSW
M De Anrade, Lake Heights NSW
O Murray, Kelso NSW
C Helderan, Mt Riverview NSW
E Harris, Arcadia Vale NSW
O Williams, Millswood SA

HEAVY GEAR COMP. ("ACTIVISION")

T Vlahos, Hackham West SA
C Chim, Dubbo NSW
Carpentaria Transport,
Archerfield QLD
S Anderson, Bundoora VIC
M Kinghorn, Craigmore SA
D Broadhurst, Nightcliff NT

FIFA 98 COMP. PICK THE PERFECT TEAM, TONS OF ENTRIES, NO ROOM TO PRINT THE WINNING TEAMS, GARETH LIKED THOSE DONE BY THESE FOLKS BEST:

D Coleman-Mann, Palmwoods QLD
C Kerr, Goulburn NSW
C Martin, Petrie QLD
E Harris, Wangi Wangi NSW
D Bintley, Niagra Park NSW
M Taplin, Camden NSW



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- Command platoons in dynamic campaigns set in Iraq, North Africa, the Russian Far East and Central Europe. Every mission is random and dictated by your strategic mastery from previous missions. The good news is as platoons experience tough combat, they'll serve you better.
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THE PC POWERPLAY/PlayNOW

Ultimate Gaming BEAST

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The mission: build the best

It started with a fanciful chat. Sitting around one Friday night, the PowerPlay crew mused at what was, in fact, the absolute, money-no-object Perfect Games PC. Technological parochialism being what it is, said Perfect

Games PC was fine-tuned via vigorous debate, the end result, agreed upon by all, is the Beast you see on this very page.

Sensing that we'd created something bigger than all of us, we took it to the next logical step. We built it. With the backing of the games heads at PlayNOW, the Australian games channel, our dream has become a reality.

The machine detailed on this page is simply the finest and fastest gaming PC on the planet. Each component has been individually selected and matched to provide maximum power and flexibility. We're in awe.

...And they will come

Here's the amazing part. Thanks to the generosity of PlayNOW, the Australian games channel, we're able to give the Beast away. We've had competitions before, but nothing as huge as this. Because this \$15,000 machine is so desirable, we're going to make you work a little for it.

The competition

Because this competition is so huge, we're running it over two issues. That means two questions (see details below).

Part 1 of the competition ran last month (PCPP # 21, February), and the super-exciting Part 2 is right here and now.

Write the answer to the Part 2 question on the back of an envelope and send it to:

**The Beast II
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick St
Redfern
NSW 2016**

Q. Name all Kilrathi combat ships from Wing Commander 1 through to 4, including mission disks.

Part 1 finalists were drawn on Friday Feb 20th 1998.

5 correct entries were drawn from the Part 1 question. 5 more correct entries will be drawn from the Part 2 question. On Friday March 21st 1998 we will draw a winner from the 10 finalists.

The Beast lives!

Even after this competition has run its course you won't be hearing the end of the Beast. Technology - especially games technology, is a fast moving thing. So, from time to time, as new components appear that impress us enough, we'll be updating the specs of the Beast. That way you'll always know what the fastest, meanest, biggest and best is.

The Beast

SYSTEM:

Pentium II 300MHz
64Mb SDRAM
2 x 4Gb IBM SCSI drives
SuperMicro P6SLS LX w/Ultra Wide SCSI controller on board
24 speed SCSI CD ROM

As our charter was to build the best, we naturally went with the fastest CPU available. It should be quite a while before you go lowering graphic detail with this mother. The SuperMicro motherboard is a speedy LX design, and importantly, has the Adaptec SCSI controller built onto the motherboard itself, saving a slot. 2 X 4Gb SCSI drives because SCSI handles them better than one large drive.

VIDEO:

Diamond Viper V330 video card
Diamond Monster 3D
VideoLogic 3DX PowerVR 2

3-phase Direct X support and hardware acceleration from hell. The Nvidia RIVA-based Viper 330 offers the fastest 2D performance around, and is complimented by unbeatable Direct3D performance. The Diamond 3Dfx was selected because Diamond have the fastest drivers. The PowerVR for those native games you can't live without and as an alternative Direct3D solution.

SOUND:

Diamond Monster Sound
Creative AWE64 Gold
Creative Cambridge Soundworks speakers

The sheer quality of the sound the PCI Monster produces is enough to warrant its inclusion, while the burden it lifts from the CPU through the PCI bus and on-board DSP is a happy bonus, as is the built-in 4-speaker surround sound. It still requires a DOS sound card though, so why

PlayNOW - NOW!

PlayNOW, the Australian games channel, delivers the latest news, reviews, demos and previews to your desktop. PlayNOW is localised pain relief to gameheads so addictive it should be illegal. www.playnow.com.au
The PlayNOW site has an entry form for the competition too, so go there, NOW!

PlayNOW!
The Australian Games Channel
www.playnow.com.au

not go with the best there is! The AWE64 Gold is the most refined realisation of the older technology available. The Cambridge Soundworks won the award in the PCPP Hot Hardware Guide. Its Bose-style satellites pump out quality sound relentlessly and the sharp and punchy subwoofer brings every Quake kill to life.

OTHER:

Sony 300sf 20" Trinitron monitor
Banksia WaveSP 56k modem
MS Mouse
Keyboard
Win 95 OSR2
1Gb JAZ SCSI Internal drive

The Sony 300sf is the perfect gaming monitor. At 20 inches the image size is just right. Any larger and you'd lose detail, any

smaller and your friends just wouldn't be impressed. We chose the Banksia WaveSP because it's fast, it's Australian and it works faultlessly. The Microsoft Mouse is, along with Edit, probably the best MS products around, and is by far and away the nicest mouse on the market. We chucked the Jaz drive in because: A. We were left with a spare SCSI port, B. They're really cool.

CONTROLLERS:

MS Sidewinder Force Feedback stick
Ferraro Advantage 1 steering wheel
Thrustmaster X-Fighter stick

For all-purpose work you can't beat the Thrusty X-Fighter. It's

big 'n' chunky with rubber bits, and most games support it natively. The MS Force Feedback stick is in because it's cutting-edge and new, as well as being pretty good with the right support. Finally, the Ferraro Advantage 1 is in because it's the best home driving controller in the world.

PART 1 ANSWER: (Most of the answer was listed in PCPP #1....!)

Q. List all Intel CPUs (including variants, such as SX and DX/2) from the 8086 (1978) through to the Pentium II/300 (1998).

- 8086 (1978) 5-10MHz
- 8088 (1979) 5-8MHz
- 80286 (1982) 6-12MHz
- Intel386DX (1985) 16-33MHz

- Intel386SX (1988) 16-33MHz
- Intel486DX (1989) 25-50MHz
- Intel386SL (1990) 20-25MHz
- Intel486SX (1991) 16-33MHz
- IntelDX2 (1992) 50-66MHz
- IntelDX4 (1994) 75-100MHz
- Intel486SL (1992) 20-33MHz
- Pentium (1993) 60-200MHz
- Pentium Pro (1995) 150-200MHz
- Pentium II 233-300MHz



Banksia

SONY

IBM

Videologic

CREATIVE
CREATIVE LABS

Microsoft

DIAMOND
MULTIMEDIA

Monster 3D

25

PCPowerPlay

Ultima Online

The PowerPlay Tour Guide

Come forth and adventure, we have legends to forge

Ultima Online is the deepest, most fantastic, most wonderful multiplayer gaming experience yet created. It is also one of the most intimidating for new players. Our essential guide traces the history of the game world to bring you up to speed, and offers many invaluable tips to help you survive in this time of gaming revolution.

Jere Lawrence, aka Afangia - Sonoma Shard.



A group of merry travellers are ambushed by evil hordes. Each character on this screen is a real person, somewhere in the real world, living their fantasies in a magical online world. Sadly though, this screenshot is also an Origin constructed one, and in the "real" Ultima Online, it would be rare to find this diversity of beasts and scenery, let alone see all players co-operating.

What is Ultima Online?

Ultima Online is a Role Playing Game (RPG) where people from around the world join together through the Internet to be one of many character classes including Mages, Fighters, Archers, Carpenters, Blacksmiths and Alchemists, to name but a few.

Within the Online Adventure, there are quests created by Origin Staff members (Game Masters) which you can try and complete. Other Quests are also on offer from other players who elect to roleplay, and make up their own adventures. By far the greatest quest in UO is the one between Good and Evil. Player Killers run around killing all they can find and the strong of the land confront them on many plains, from dungeons to their own houses. To date there hasn't been a detailed plot line for Ultima Online, instead the evolution of the game has taken it to this battle between good and evil player. Rumours are about now that Origin have noticed this gravitation and are devising a plot line to allow both evil and good player to compete to either turn Britannia to the dark side, or point it back to the light.

In the beginning...

The Ultima series of games have spanned back to the literal dawn of computer gaming. The very first in the series that has now become Ultima Online was of course Ultima I, but this was inspired because of the success of a previously little known title called Akalabeth. Written by a teenager in his room and sold from his garage, the at the time unknown Richard Garriott was about to become one of the most famous names and figure-heads of the computer gaming industry - Lord British himself.

Not including Ultima 8, which was essentially a flop, the Ultima Series of games have captured the imaginations and hearts of people all around the world. The first incarnations, Ultima I - 3, allowed you to play as the standard RPG types such as thieves, wizards and fighters etcetera. However, the game offered hack and slash adventuring with a brilliant storyline yet no real moral or crusading substance. Something that the religious of America struck out at Garriott about, claiming that he was trying to coerce the youth into Satan Worship.

The Honour System

Troubled by these accusations, Lord British then went back to the drawing board and decided to pen out a game that offered extremely in-depth adventuring and a strong moral ground to stand upon. Thus the Avatar was born. First seen in Ultima IV, the undisputed greatest Ultima there was, Lord British called upon a hero to be an example of goodness upon the land and save Britannia from Darkness.

Ultima IV with its virtue system forced players to become honourable, sacrificial, compassionate, valiant, honest, spiritual,

humble and just. No-one could complain about Ultima IV. In fact, everyone loved it. It was the closest a computer game had ever come to offering an insight into Arthurian times, with Knights (The Avatar) riding off to slay terrible dragons and demons, all whilst being an example to the people of the land.

Back to Britannia

Ultima Online, 10 years after Ultima IV, takes us back to the wondrous land of Britannia. Where Ultima 8 was set on a new land in Pagan (a terrible mistake), Ultima Online took us all back to Britannia in an effort to bring like minded Ultima fans into a real thriving virtual world. Initially more ambitious desires were afoot for a mostly player driven economy and policing system, but that failed miserably in the alpha stages. In its current form, Ultima Online's econo-

spend their time doing), within the game you can become a blacksmith or an alchemist, carpenter, chef or scribe, and with vendors, you could become a merchant to list just some of the skills and classes.

To get technical though, Ultima Online can be summed up as a massive project that involves a series of servers allowing upwards of 3000 people to play on the Internet at any given time. Currently, there are 7 servers plus the test center making for about 20,000 players.

Ultima Online Chronology

It all started at the end of September. Rumours had been abounding for the last few days, but nobody believed that the unfinished quagmire of a program before them was ready to be released. We were Beta testers for Ultima Online, and the idea that it

"It's the only multiplayer game where you wish there were no other players."

my is a fairly nice mix between player and NPC (Non Player Characters) controlled. UO also features a uniquely thriving though often over hunted ecology.

Ultima Online is actually supposedly set around the time of Ultima 2. Mondain (the evil wizard of Ultima I) has been slain and as Ultima 2 dictates, his smitten and bereaved student is about to seize control of the land again and attempt to destroy earth. Whether or not we will see the rise of Mondains Child bride (Minax) is yet to be known, but there is one certainty in Ultima Online - there are definitely no Avatars.

The Megaplayer Game

Essentially, Ultima Online is the world's first megaplayer game. That is to say, more than 1000 people can play at any given time. Some call it a graphical MUD (Multi User Domain), but in reality it is much more complex. The combat system for example allows for battles to be waged that are simply magnificent.

It's not just about battle though (although that's what 90% of the online population

could be anywhere near ready had us laughing ourselves silly).

But then one fateful day, who could ever forget. We logged in all eager to play, only to see the system message thanking us for our support and bug reports. The beta was ending at the end of the week. Disbelief washed over us, and for many of you in Australia, that was the last time you would ever log in.

Was the Beta ready for release? No. Is Ultima Online ready for release now? Sort of. Will Ultima Online ever be ready for release? Well you see, that depends on who you talk too. Herein lies the reason that Ultima Online has received so much criticism the world over. Whether Ultima Online is ready or not is a question that every player answers differently.

If you were a Player Killer (PK) for example, Ultima Online was ready at the beginning of the final when you could kill people with one spell. If you were a Fighter though, Ultima Online was ready a few months ago when they could fell trolls in 2 strikes. If you were a Mage, Ultima Online was ready just a week ago when you could cast off as many spells as lag permitted.

Glossary

Richard Garriott - Lord British the Co-Founder of Origin and star mind/master storyteller behind the Ultima Series.

Starr Long - Lord Blackthorne and Executive Producer of UO and 2nd in charge to Richard Garriott.

Avatar - The embodiment of the virtues Honesty, Honour, Compassion, Valour, Spirituality, Humility, Sacrifice and Justice. He is the one sent for in Ultima IV to guide Britannia back to the ways of Truth, Love and Courage.

NPC - Non Player Character

UO - Ultima Online

GM - Game Master (Origin Staff Members that assist players in need (i.e program bugs) or create and participate in quests.

PK - Player Killer. A player who sides with evil and kills other players.

Recall - A Spell that allows travel to any destination in Britannia

Fireball - A spell that allows you to char-grill your opponent.

Reagents - The ingredients needed to cast spells.

Vendors - Player set up NPC shopkeepers who will sell your goods for you 24 hours a day.

Scribes - Players who choose to become scholars can copy spells into scrolls for you, for a fee of course. Most often found outside Magic Shops.

Provisioner - The NPC who buys the majority of treasure to be found in Ultima Online.

Deposit Box - A special bank chest that allows you to store non essential treasure and equipment in case you die.

The Balance of Power

In the most bizarre twist of irony, in Ultima Online the factor that makes the game so appealing, the multitude of players, is the same factor that makes it such a damn pain as well. It's the only multiplayer game where you wish there were no other players. The nightmare continues for the developers too, for every character type they manage to please, they will just upset another. The Mages vs the Fighters is a prime example. Every increase in spell damage detracts from a Fighter's abilities. Every decrease in spell damage detracts from a Mage's.

By far the greatest and most controversial form of modifications have been made to try and keep Player Killing under control. In Ultima Online, the things you fear most aren't the massive demons and dragons that lurk in the bowels of a dungeon. No, it's the guy standing next to you, about to sink a knife deep into your back, or burn you to a crisp from a barrage of spells.

Even after playing only a short time, one of the most pained realisations you will make with Ultima Online is that it's an indicator (albeit a sad one) to the state of human morality and psychology. It literally proves that if an individual can "get one over on someone" without fear of repercussion, they certainly will. Combine that with the fact that they are paying to play, and the American attitude of "the customer is always right" and

In all, UO was off to a bad start.

Next up was the great Grand Master Bug. In one of the many patches flurried about in the early days, one came about that allowed everyone to become a Grandmaster in 1 hour. Suddenly Insta-GM's were everywhere and almost every monster was hunted to extinction. The bug was fixed, but as per the terms and conditions, Origin could not wipe the bugged players at all.

In between these crashes however, the beginning of something fantastic started to happen that we all longed after, GM induced quests. Whilst playing the game, you would suddenly see a message from the mayor of a town stating that they were being overrun by X type monsters, say Skeletons. Adventurers from all over the world would journey to defend the area. Those that were lucky enough to participate in these said that they were the best times they ever had. OSI (Origin Systems Incorporated) techies no doubt weren't too fond of them though. More often than not these events would crash the servers, create massive amounts of lag and generate angry mail from people demanding that major bugs being fixed should be the priority and not these distractions. Sadly after 2 weeks of events, they suddenly stopped.

In this situation, it seems that OSI listened to the wrong people. Player Killing in the beta was a minor problem that occurred only occasionally. With the ending of the events,

"Meeting up with new friends to slay evil demons in a far off dungeon is a gaming experience unparalleled by anything else out there. Ultima Online, despite all its flaws and bugs, is an accomplishment the world has never seen before."

you have a volatile mix more apt for a diplomat to be defusing, than a bunch of designers and programmers.

The Patch Madness

Let us now take you through a journey of changes made in Ultima Online to bring you up to date with the history of Online Britannia. This is a chronology and not intended to be a slight on Origin. For although Origin have done some utterly stupid things in their patches, they've made some brilliant additions as well.

The Early Days

Things couldn't have started worse for Origin. For those that had been playing in the Beta, the opportunity arose to order the Charter Edition of the game which supposedly would be shipped long before anyone else's. Let's just say it didn't. UO Vault, (<http://www.newworldci.com/uovault/>) the premiere Ultima Online news site was literally filled with messages on its chat board from those who ordered the Charter Edition, having not received their copy, while the retail version was appearing in the US shops. To make matters worse, when the Charter Editions finally shipped, many people got billed twice and were sent 2 copies. This meant that not all the Charter orders were filled, many having to wait until a lucky owner returned his second copy for a credit.

and all the bugged GM's walking around, players discovered there wasn't a whole lot to do. Monster population, because of server debugging, was at an all time low and suddenly there were no great quests for players to become involved in. What was left to do? Kill the guy next to you of course...

The Dark Ages: The Player Killing Period

This was easily Ultima Online's darkest time. In the beta, due to constant player wipes, characters were never alive long enough for the effects of powerful characters on the monster population and other players to be observed. With the suddenly monster-sparse land of the final, those that turned to Player Killing saw that it was all so easy and there were an awful lot more players around then there were monsters. It worked in either of two ways. If your character was fairly weak a Mage would paralyse you while a Grandmaster Swordsman (from the bug of course) would descend upon you and kill you in a few blows.

The other variation, and soon to be most common, was the Mage kill. Mages would paralyse you, then cast lightning on you twice to kill you. The battle lasted all of 2 seconds and you were entirely defenceless throughout it. Players across the globe fumed as groups of immature 12 year old school children formed gangs and went about declaring that



(above, top to bottom)

The chaos shrine is the only place a Player killer can rest. Here is the aftermath of a massive battle of the Player Killers (the bad guys) vs the Anti Player Killers (Good guys - I'm an anti). The dead bodies everywhere are the slaughtered PKs

The infamous Britain bank where all the beggars are actual Player characters

Inside the bank

Another view of the above battle

they "owned this server now" and everyone else could "get f***ed".

Origin lost more customers to this than any other problem. Even the still constant Server crashes were less of an issue to the players than the rampant player killing that was occurring. Traversing the land in this time was an absolute joke. In contrast to the beta,

where everyone walked along the roads and conversations flourished, in this time of the final nobody dared use the roads. Instead, people would sprint everywhere, skulking through the trees in an effort not to be seen. The game quite simply in this state was not fun at all and I had never been so close to closing my account. Combat was neither

(below, top to bottom)

Minoc bank, because of its prime location between Dungeon Despise and Covetous, is the focal point for many a bounty hunter

The firey entrance to Dungeon Covetous

Hiding inside Dungeon Despise try to flush out PKs

Handing out money in the streets of Trinsic. To celebrate the Anti-PK victory, we walked around the streets handing out piles of 50 gold.



strategic nor honourable. Bugged GM's would not only fry you whilst paralysed, but after you were killed, insult you in the most infuriating ways as your ghost stood there watching your corpse being looted.

OSI's response was to create deposit boxes in banks for people to store their non-essential equipment in to make death less painful. This may have helped a little, except for the snooping bug. In UO, if you played as a thief, the worst title you would receive is Dark Lord, which still allowed entry into a city. As a murderer, you would become a Dread Lord and be denied access to a city. The snooping bug as it became known allowed Dread Lords to peek into each others backpacks, set off the stealing code, and "snoop" their way back to Dark Lord. This gave them access to the banks in the city and they could store all their ill-gotten gain without fear of losing it.

The Great Player Protest

Things really couldn't get much worse. Now, not only were we being slaughtered in the wilderness, but known murderers could exploit bugs and walk around cities free to taunt the people they had just killed. The people needed their voice heard and it wasn't OSI that responded, but a Vietnam Vet known by the name Mohdri Dragon. He staged a protest designed to overload all the Servers, and as the instigator of the first virtual protest made news around the world. The protest worked by everyone making a dummy character, stripping off their clothes and becoming drunk in game. Everyone then lined up outside Lord British's castle and blocked the streets until were allowed entry. Once inside, people killed each other and generally made a hell of a mess. By forcing guards to teleport in and break up the ruckus, the servers would become more unstable. Richard Garriott eventually showed up, but only after Lord Blackthorne (OSI Producer Starr Long) came in to be shouted down by some rather graphically insulting insinuations regarding sexual relations involving him and Garriott.

Thus the bounty system was born.

The patch that introduced the bounty system was both good yet frustratingly bad. The servers weren't crashing anymore, monster population was at an all-time high and at last the snooping bug was removed, keeping Dreads as Dreads. Things were looking good, until exploitation of a newer more frustrating bug labelled the Newbie Mage bug arose. Somewhere along the line, whilst revising spell damage (Paralyze was turned into a defensive spell so that as soon as the player was struck, he could run away), Magic Arrow, a first level spell could do over 1/3rd damage to another player.

The result was that the Player Killers could now create dummy newbie Mage characters and slaughter a Grandmaster Warrior in 3 incantations. These Player Killers lost nothing and used their Newbie Mages to gain exorbitant wealth for their primary Great Lord characters. Another exploit had made it through OSI's "rigorous QA" and more serious players were victimised.

Things however did start to get better after

that patch. The introduction of a Bounty allowed players to hunt the Player Killers back. Upon death you received their head and a reward could be collected. The reward however was a joke, the contents of the Player Killers deposit box. Player Killers definitely aren't stupid and they clean out their deposit box before going Dread (knowing they will no longer be able to gain access to the city). Many would leave 1gp in their box (your reward) and a book titled "HaHa YoU SuCK".

You could live with this though, as it wasn't so much the reward, it was the punishment. A Player Killer whose head you received lost 5 from his Strength, Dexterity and Intelligence (a significant loss) and 3 points off every skill. This hurt the players characters badly and was finally an indication from OSI that anti-social behaviour was not to be tolerated.

And Still There Were Bugs...

Things were getting better, the newest patch came online and spell damage against other players was halved, with battles made to last longer. Finally Player Killing was on the way down as now people could escape. The obligatory bug had to slip through though, of course, and this one unfortunately was a doosey. Wearing a certain type of armour - leather actually, you were totally impervious to all kinds of spells that involved fire. This bug was actually a spin-off of one of the most stupid "enhancements" OSI had made to the game yet. They decided that certain spells would have their damage increased depending on the type of armour you wore. Platemail, for example, took more damage from lightning and fire spells, leaving Fighters again at the mercy of Mages. The game became severely unbalanced again. If you wore platemail to enter a dungeon in order to stand a chance against monsters, a Player Killer could appear and toast you. If you wore leather armour to stand a chance against the Player Killers, a monster could quickly bring about your untimely demise.

This latest patch brings us up to date with Ultima Online as at the time of writing. Spell damage being increased by armour has been removed to everyone's delight and a welcome new addition called Vendors have been added. Vendors are a wonderful inclusion to the UO world and allow players to sell their items in total safety. Tents, houses and businesses have appeared all over Britannia with many different items for sale. Those that were just about to give Ultima up suddenly found themselves revitalised as in-game merchants. Of course this isn't to say something stupid wasn't added. The first problem was that Dread Lords (Player Killers) could own a vendor.

Finally a bug was fixed, stopping PK's from having access to city bank accounts, and now Vendors were introduced which they were allowed to use. PK's would simply have a vendor deed purchased for them, and as Vendors can't be killed or stolen from, store all their ill-gotten gain in total safety again.

This paled in comparison with the most stupid bug to slip through. This bug caused every sane person to suddenly doubt that OSI bothers to table and debate their ideas. They decided to make field spells affect your noto-

riety. If a Mage cast a fire field to aid in the killing of monsters, all an inconsiderate person need do is walk back and forth through it making the program think the caster is attacking them. You can send a Great Lord Mage to Dread Lord with only 3 friends walking through. Fire Field has now become just another area affect spell that the "good guys" can't use that a Dread Lord can (their notoriety can't go any lower).

The Magic

In all though, Ultima Online is still the most captivating game there is. The pure adventure, the thrill of battle as the anti-PK's battle the Pks is compelling. Making sure your Vendor has enough stock for your customers and meeting up with new friends to slay evil demons in a far off dungeon are gaming experiences unparalleled by anything else out there. Ultima Online despite all its flaws and bugs is an accomplishment the world has never seen before. One that I am very proud to be a part off.

Staying Alive

Ultima Online playguide

Playing Ultima Online is a daunting task in itself and not a venture you can set out upon lightly. The first and most important order of the day, especially since we're from Australia, is the Internet connection. At the time of writing of this article, the Australian server is only a rumour and therefore only the West coast of the United States is available to play on.

How to test the connection:

Before you even purchase your copy of Ultima Online, perform this test. Open up a DOS prompt while you're online and type:

Ping Pacific.owo.com
Ping Napavalley.owo.com
Ping Sonoma.owo.com

To play UO and have a chance at survival, you're going to require a ping that averages between 300 - 430ms and packet loss no greater than 5%. If your ISP cannot achieve this (most unlimited access ISP's in Australia can't) then UO for you would be a waste of money. We have plans afoot to do an ISP test for UO, but until then you'll need to test it yourself.

Character Creation

Ok, your ping and loss are good, UO is in your hands and you're ready to play. The first thing you need to do is create a character. In this guide, we're not going to tell you the best set of stats to pick, UO is about role playing and not "my numbers are bigger then your numbers". Whatever you do though, ignore every UO character template, they're useless.

At the first part of the character creation screen, you will be prompted with 65 points to allocate to Strength, Dexterity and Intelligence. Strength in the game are your hit points, Dexterity is your stamina, or how long you can last in a fight and Intelligence is

"One of the most pained realisations you will make with Ultima Online is that it's an indicator (albeit a sad one) of the state of human morality and psychology. It literally proves that if an individual can "get one over on someone" without fear of repercussion, they certainly will."

your mana, or how many, or high a certain spell you can cast. Here's a hint, within the game itself, the hardest stat to raise is strength, so you might want to consider giving yourself a head start there.

The next screen will give you a list of skills to select from. Many will probably be tempted to rush and allocate a number of points to a combat skill. This is a common and silly mistake. By far, one of the most powerful skills in Ultima Online is the Hiding Skill. By Setting it to 50, you will be able to hide most times. What makes Hiding so useful is that monsters will break off attack whilst you're hidden.

If you're traversing a dungeon and are suddenly swamped by 3 Ratmen, a Scorpion and a Giant Spider, as a relatively new player, you're not going to be able to survive against these odds. By simply running and "hiding" the monsters will move away, or attack someone else. Likewise, if you spy a PK, by running and hiding, they can't see you, and therefore can't kill you.

By starting with 50 Hiding, you still have 50 points left to distribute, you could select a combat skill, or 2 other skills. Don't be too concerned with your choices, as in-game you can get most skills raised to 30 for 300 gold by asking an NPC to "train" you.

Surviving and Raising Stats

There are many ways to make money in Ultima Online and all should be explored for their entertainment value. Tailoring, for example, involves travelling to the city of Yew (or other wilderness city), finding a sheep, shearing it, taking the wool back to Britain, using it on a Spinning wheel turning it into yarn, placing the yarn on a loom to make a bolt of cloth, then sewing items of clothing to sell. It doesn't make the big dollars, but the adventures that can be had in the process of doing it and the people you'll meet make it all worthwhile.

Making Money

Those that want a constant, lucrative and honest income will turn to mining. By extracting the ore from a cavern wall, taking it to a forge and smelting it into ingots, you can sell each ingot to a Blacksmith for about 5 gold each. Averaging 20 ingots per haul, there's 100 gold. Once you have enough money, purchase a pack horse or pack llama and you can haul even more ore to make more ingots and more money with.

All skill-based forms of money making in UO pale in comparison to the "loot" that can be found on monsters. This may seem daunting, for as a newbie you're barely able to kill a rabbit. The trick however is to join in the attack, and not actually attack anything yourself.

With one of the more recent patches, a monster when attacked will follow its attacker

until dead. What this means is that if you see someone fighting a creature, you can join in battle without fear of the monster harming you. As long as the victim/attacker survives the monster will ignore you. Very quickly your combat stats will rise with no threat of harm to yourself.

Most importantly, don't loot the corpse when it's dead. You are just there to raise combat skills and it's not worth upsetting the more advanced adventurers in case they decide you're a pain and kill you. Once your combat skills rise to the point where you can kill the intermediate monsters, then take them down and loot all their treasures for yourself. Of important note, make sure you regularly return to the bank and place all your plunder in the deposit box. When you have enough, or lag is bad, go to the provisioner and "sell your loot". Before too long, you'll be helping newbies get their first kills.

Getting Around

One of the most fascinating elements of UO, the travelling, can soon become the most dull. To aid the adventurer, a forth level spell called recall allows you to travel anywhere on the map to which a recall rune was marked. Recall is a 4th level spell which means you'll need to have acquired some magery.

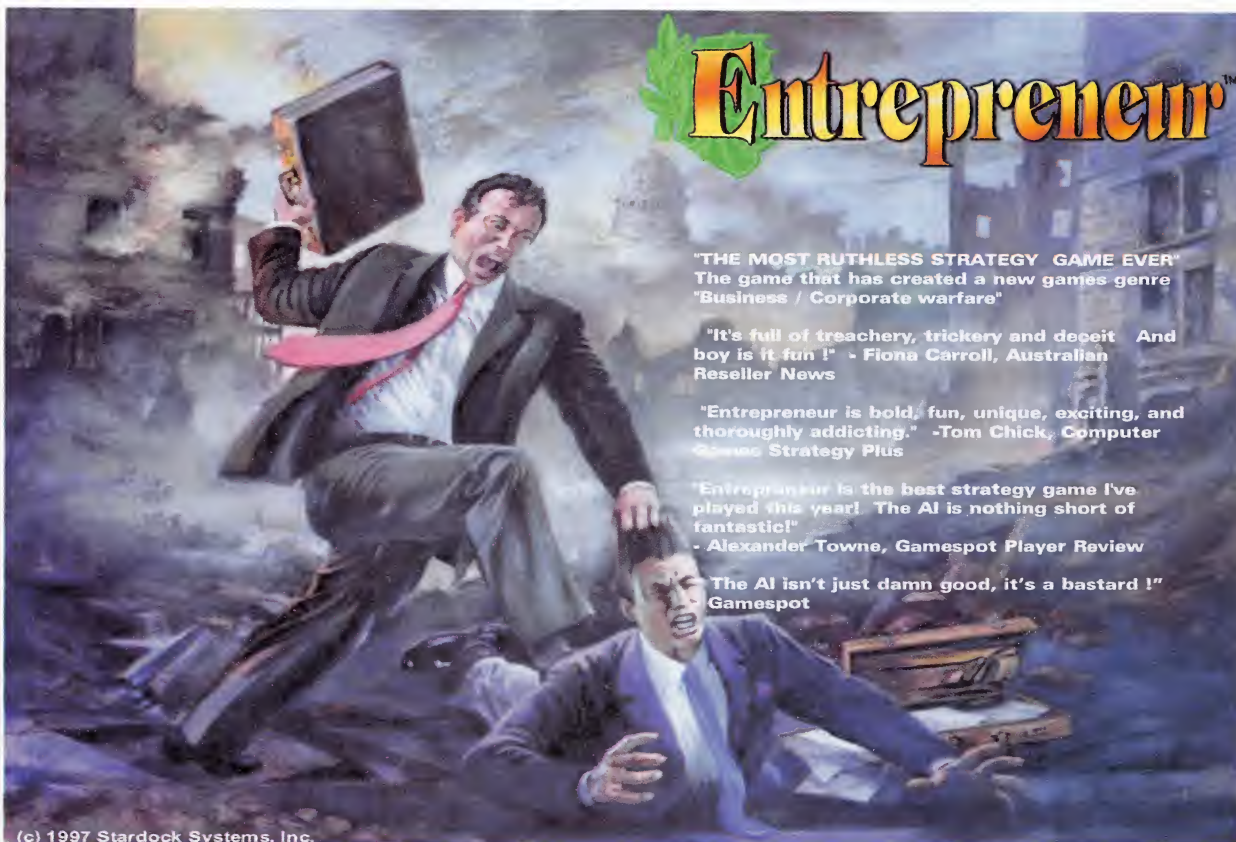
The best way to raise this stat is to go the mage shop, buy a spell book, and pay an NPC to train your magery to 30. It's also worth training your magical resistance as well. You will need 40 magery, 12 intelligence and 4 of each spell from circles 1, 2 and 3 to cast recall. So seek out a Vendor or a Scribe (most players who scribe will hang outside the Mage shop) and buy some scrolls. Make sure you get a Fireball and of course, a Recall scroll.

Place the scrolls in your spellbook and buy plenty of black pearl and sulphurous ash (the Reagents required for fireball). Now, on your journeys to the dungeons, kill the lesser creatures with a few fireballs. After casting this about 75 times, your magery will rise to 40 and you can then cast recall to travel around all of Britannia.

Mark, the spell required to make a rune, is a 6th level spell which is beyond your means. However, Recall runes for dungeons and other cities can be purchased from a Mages Vendor all over Britannia. Runes are expensive and valuable, so be sure to keep them in the bank, as you can Recall from your deposit box.

Good Luck!!

Be an adventurer and travel for the good of the land. Flee or hide from the PKing hordes, and once strong enough, be sure to fight the good fight against them. Never turn to the dark side, the good guys kick ass!



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Unreal

2 years late, Unreal has lost the title 'Quake-Killer' to the mighty Quake 2. Due for imminent release, Unreal will be scrutinised like no other game before it...

Category	First person action
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	GT Interactive
Available	2nd Qtr 98

Yet again, it's time to get excited about one of the big four upcoming first person games, Unreal, Sin, Prey and Half-Life. If things work out, by the time you read this it will be mere weeks (and possibly only days) before you see this game on shelves of local game stores. Unreal has been a long time in development, it's received a hell of a lot of hype, and has generated considerable interest from the gaming community - if it lives up to the potential then Unreal will almost definitely be one of the smash hit releases of the year. But for those of you who've spent the last year or so with your head stuck down a hole, here's another run down of what you can expect.

Deathmatch ready

First up, and possibly most importantly in terms of lastability, is the multiplayer setup. While the programming team have in some ways followed in id's footsteps, in others they've managed to come up with some pretty decent ideas themselves. Unreal will most probably use a Quakeworld-like system for player and weapon fire tracking, with the client taking care of player movement and the server handling weapon fire. What this means is that when you move, the client (i.e. your computer) will track where you are and tell the server, whereas the server will track weapon fire and let your computer know what's going on in that area. There is no easy way to fix lag problems though, and seeing as this is the same method that Quakeworld uses, then it should work well - there shouldn't be too many hassles finding a low

ping server. And there should be plenty of servers to choose from too - though not in the traditional sense.

Rather than have one server set up to run one level until it's decided to change, Unreal servers will be able to link together to make up huge worlds. The idea is that servers will link to each other so that when a player connects they will be able to teleport to another map seamlessly - the end result being that up to hundreds of servers are joined together, with players either staying in one map or moving about to others as they choose. Now how cool would that be? Then there's the ability to see what weapons your opponent is carrying - Unreal will use a 'mesh' for each weapon, so you'll know whether it's time to move in for the kill or to run away like a scaredy cat - and it's about time that this was implemented too!

Multi-mode weapons

The single player game hasn't been ignored in favour of the deathmatch experience, instead Epic are promising one of the most involving and immersive worlds made for a first person shooter to date. The storyline isn't Pulitzer prize material, but still it sets the scene nicely. You're a convict, sentenced to life imprisonment on a penal colony but your transport craft crash lands en-route, dumping you on an alien world full of nasty beasts out to get you, naturally. They're not all nasty though - one of the races, the Nali are the actual owners of the planet, and because you're going around blowing up the invader aliens they're inclined to help you out occasionally, showing you where to go and so on. To deal with the bad aliens

you'll have at your disposal a variety of rather cool weaponry which promises to be a bit of a derivation from the usual pistol/shotgun/chaingun/plasma/BFG type setup. They'll only tell us about a few of the weapons available, but you can look forward to the Assault Rifle, with two modes of fire - single shot for long range accuracy and a three round burst for close up damage infliction, the Flak Cannon for sending out chunks of flak for close range and grenades for longer range targets, the Razorjack which seems a lot like the chainsaw gun from Redneck Rampage, and plenty more too.

Cutting edge tech

Also, in terms of graphical capabilities, Unreal stands out ahead of the pack. Full 24-bit colour, hi resolution graphics, support for every 3D accelerator on Earth, realistic environmental effects like fire burning and water rippling, and highly detailed monsters and objects to boot. Just check out some of the screenshots printed here and I'm sure you'll agree that this is looking like one hell of a pretty game. But it won't just be a case of 'looks pretty, plays crap' either. Epic have roped in Steven Polge for the monster AI, and





seeing as he's the guy who was responsible for the Quake Reaper bot it should be pretty impressive. Then there's the level design - although Epic are shouting long and loud about how cool their level design is, they also acknowledge that for long term viability of the game it must be relatively easy to create and use modified maps, weapons, monsters and so on. So they're going to include a full editor program with each copy of the game, and it promises to be extremely user friendly whilst still remaining a very powerful utility. Unreal is built on UnrealScript in the same way that Quake was built on QuakeC. UnrealScript is a mixture of Visual Basic and Java, and Epic have made plenty of effort to

make it as accessible as possible to the novice programmer, and oh so easy for those with experience to screw with to their heart's desire.

All up, Unreal looks...well, I'm sure it's been done before but I just can't resist - Unreal looks unreal. We should have a copy for review next issue (fingers crossed), and we'll let you know whether it's ended up as good as it could be. But if it does turn out to live up to the promise, then this is truly going to be one of the games of the year.

Gareth Jones



Multiplay is going to be incredibly cool, with multiple remote servers linked symbolically making for a huge deathmatching arena - more rooms, more players, and more choice in whom you kill. Wa hey! We're impressed.

Starcraft

Blizzard invested an enormous amount of time and effort into getting Starcraft just right. An excellent game it is, but instead of going to the next level, they've perfected the original RTS style.

Category	Real time Strategy
Players	1-4 (Battle.Net)
Publisher	Blizzard
Available	March/April

Does Starcraft live up to expectations? Well it depends on what you were hoping for. If, after the long time in development, you were anticipating gameplay that is on par with the naughtier things in life, well it's not that good. Think Warcraft 2 game mechanics and controls but greatly expanded, with three very different sides. The Terrans are space-faring humans with a nice military-meets-ye old southern redneck sort of feel. A good starting side as they play very similarly to Warcraft 2. Build Supply Stations (err..Farms) and then Barracks and Factories to produce your infantry and heavy weaponry. The Zerg are the obligatory "Gooney" aliens modelled on a cross between Geiger's movie creation, the Blob and everything else that goes bump and slurp. Instead of building units you mutate your ever increasing supply of larvae into whatever is required, be it Peons (err..drones) or fully fledged Warriors and Queens. Weaker than the Terrans unit for unit, the relative cheapness of the Zerg's construction costs can lead to a rapid build up of large forces. Then there are the Protoss. Advanced beings that have mastered matter manipulation to the extent of being able to warp all the goodies of war onto the battlefield from their home planet Auir. Protoss units are more expensive than both the Terrans and the Zerg but are individually the strongest, the Archon being an example of an infantry unit that can rip larger mechanised weaponry to shreds. The only obvious similarity



Warcraft 2 fans will be immediately at home with the graphics in Starcraft... we're not talking about 1024x768, or true 3D units, or true LOS, or...

between the sides is their reliance on collecting both minerals and Vespene Gas thus constructing new units and advancing through the technology tree. Banish any memories of the limited upgrade path of War2, not only can all the unit type's armour and weapon strength be upgraded multiple times but so can special characteristics. Take the Terran Tank, when first built it does what tanks normally do, but can be later upgraded to having the option of going into Siege mode. Nice stuff as you see stabiliser struts clamping the big boy onto the ground and then firing artillery shells rather than normal tank ordinance. Graphical highlights like this, there are a plenty. The Protoss Carrier with its drone fighters attacking like a swarm of bees. The Zerg's ability to melt into the ground and mutate Terran bases, and the Protoss' impressive use of energy field weaponry. This is no pump out unit type "X" and rush forward, your opponent's numerous different types of attack and defence

powerups always have to be carefully considered.

Starcraft is looking good. The emphasis is on using the immense upgrade path in a versatile way to your advantage, eg. the choice of strengthened airforce vs land army build up. Not just blindly upgrading everything, as this leads to running short of resources and getting caught short with a weakened force in the mid to end game. It's a comfort knowing that even close to the expected release date Blizzard are tinkering and reacting to player's feedback on how to enhance the game and most importantly stopping cheap tactics like rushing. While it's disappointing that Starcraft isn't going to match the likes of TA in real world LOS or physics, Blizzard seem to be on the way to producing a formidable sequel to Warcraft2.

Pete Sharpe



(above) How things change... The original Starcraft design is light-years away from the final game. Shows you where all those years went!





Everquest

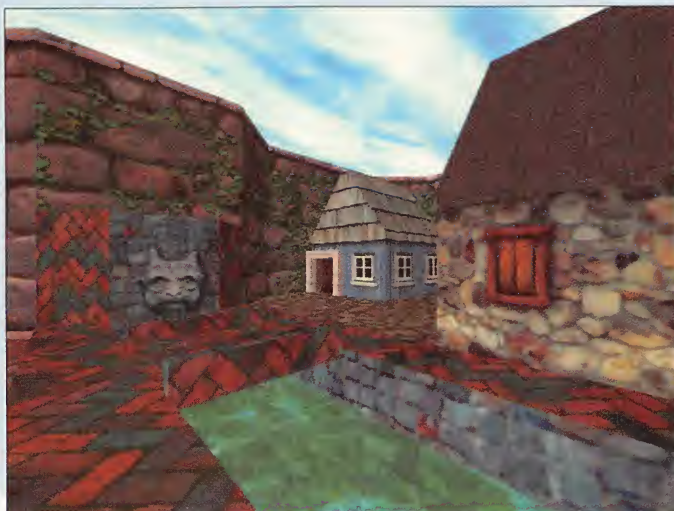
Category	Online RPG
Players	1-up to 1000 online
Publisher	Sony
Available	Spring 98

Everquest is the latest attempt at a large-scale Online Role-Playing Game, and it's first-person 3D !! Ain't science somethin'.....!

This looks to be the saviour of everyone who looked at Hexen and lusted after more interaction, NPC's and Quests, and all that kind of deeper funky stuff. Likewise, those who played Ultima Online and thought: "I bet you could do this as a first person thing". Well think no more (!), because Sony looks set to unleash it upon us.

The developers really have set a lofty target in EverQuest. Combining Quake-like graphics and a truly deep Online RPG sounds fairly Pie-in-the-Sky, considering recent attempts, but all sources indicate Sony is very confident in the project. If they're successful they will totally outclass everything in the genre.

Gameplay-wise, it seems you will have a Diablo-esque interface, as in your attacks will have a certain speed and frequency: all you can really do is control them directionally, (and perhaps stage a valiant withdrawal). The developers stress that this is not a



"twitch" game, you will need careful tactics and smart strategy to win battles. Of course as your character improves they will begin winning more often, as per usual.

It's got Direct3D hardware acceleration support, in fact it's "highly recommended", and the sneak preview we got looks like a cross between Tomb Raider and Hexen, but with full-on towns and civilisations, and of course a world filled with NPC's and online players to interact with. The target at this stage is



to have up to 1000 players together on any one server.

With 640x480 res, 16 bit colour and completely Polygonal characters, it's probably the best graphics seen in an RPG, let alone an Online adventure! The pre-alpha version we looked at already had very impressive real-time light-sourcing and water transparency, as well as awesome pyrotechnic effects.

There is going to be careful separation between the Normal players and those who attack other players, called Player-Killers (PK'ers). Player-Killers take on a sort of "criminal" identity, because of the power inherent in killing people and looting their gear. PK'ers will be disadvantaged when doing things like going shopping, for instance, which the other people will be able to do unimpeded. This will bring a cheer from any Diablo players who were wrongly slain and looted by "comrades" at the peak of their quest.

Along the vein of subduing the undesirable, there will be much attention paid to reducing the influence hackers can have on the game, which will hopefully be effective.

Also, it seems that Sony are really pushing the complexity factor, with more than 40 unique skills available to each player,

as well as factors like Religion, Species, Politics, and of course Magic. There will be 5 magic-using classes available, and literally hundreds of spells to learn. Not to mention things like the unique Quest Artifacts and the thousands of weapons and tools you can acquire. All of these factors can only make the experience more surprising and versatile. If it lives up to expectations, it can't fail to explode the online gaming world!!

We'll keep you posted on this one.

Ed Dawson

**As the on-line RPG competition
hots up, Sony reveal their world of
your wildest dreams**



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MAX



Behind Enemy lines: Commando

Category	Tactical Wargame
Players	Internet play
Publisher	Eidos/Pyro Studios
Available	April

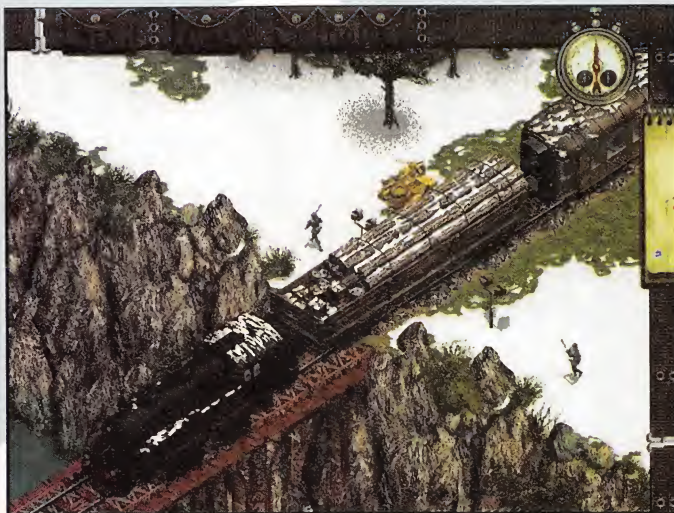
Commandos simulates the assault operations of an elite group of Allied Commandos spread over 24 varying missions in Europe and North Africa. Because of the stealth-like nature of this toughest of Army soldier, you'll have to study your objectives, environment and the movements of the enemy before deciding on the best strategic way of completing the mission.

The game will only allow you a very small number of Commandos for each mission, probably no more than 10 or 12, for the simple reason that these guys were 'in and out' mercenaries. You have to choose which men to take on any given mission, each of these men will have very specific skills.

The game itself takes place in a virtual 3D environment, though from an isometric view, to make things easier for the player. Not only will your missions take place over a variety of terrain, from mountains and beaches, to snow and desert, but, as in real warfare, there will be numerous military structures to overcome: barbed wire; walls; tunnels; bunkers; watchtowers and many others.

The basic idea behind the game stems from a desire to enhance the 'tactical' element (as opposed to the now-commonplace 'strategic' element) of game play, placing the emphasis on presenting situations within a given context and having the player figure out how to correctly use the elements made available to him to solve the problems he or she is confronted with. Keeping in mind that Commandos always acted behind enemy lines, you'll find yourself far outnumbered, which is where you pit the specialization of your men against the numerical inferiority. Pyro have developed Commandos to be in three distinct sections: a) analysis of the situation and tactical distribution of your men; b) attack; c) retreat to the extraction point.

The developers don't intend the game to be easy, though. The complex AI system for the enemy will simulate the behaviour of those units in real situations; they will only know of events



It looks a lot like this is styled on the Jagged Alliance type of game - except BEL:C is going to be real time. Way cool!



within the reach of one of their senses (sight, touch and hearing). For instance, an explosion will be heard by virtually everyone whilst feet on snow will be perceived only by those very near.

The actual graphics, from the uniforms and weapons, to the vehicles and buildings, have been modeled in 3D based on their real historic equivalents. Not only have the faces of your Commandos been fully rendered, the attention to detail means that it looks as though they are carrying knives, pistols, ropes, etc. They also move as would expect a Commando to.

The interface consists of two elements; a menu of basic game options and an operative menu. Mouse or hot keys can control all the options. One nice feature is the zoom window that allows a close-up of the action to be viewed. This is useful if your sniper is aiming at a specific target in a cluster of friendlies.

The whole team of Commandos will have common skills (using pistols, stabbing, etc) and other skills will be exclusive to specific men. These special skills will be determined by two factors. The first one will be to have complex abilities limited to very specialised men (i.e.: the Spy will be the only one being able to disguise as the enemy and infiltrate himself, the Sniper will be the only high precision shooter). The second factor will be having the necessary equipment to do some specialised tasks. Since this equipment is assigned, each Commando will carry the one corresponding to their abilities (i.e.: the bomb expert will transport the bombs,



the canoeist will have the diving gear, the Commando will have the climbing tools, etc.)

Commandos is the type of game that screams out for network play and, thankfully, that option will be included. We're looking forward to doing a full review as much as we hope you are of reading it. Stay tuned.

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Black Dahlia

Category	Adventure
Players	1
Publisher	Directsoft
Available	TBA

The term 'interactive movie' used to be something that almost everyone sneered at - and with good reason too. It's only been a couple of years since multimedia really got going, and some of the early 'interactive movies' were pretty tragic. Since the original idea of making a movie where you play the central figure rather than just passively watch grabbed the attention of the mainstream media and more than a few Hollywood types, the advancements in the genre have been quite significant.

Nowadays, we can expect actors of some pedigree (even if mostly they are a little past their use-by date), a decent storyline, and jaw dropping visuals - and even occasionally some decent gameplay elements as well. Standouts in the genre include the Tex Murphy series, the Phantasmagoria games, and if 'The Black Dahlia' lives up to expectations it's going to be another to join the ranks of 'good interactive movies/adventure games'.

Random slaughter

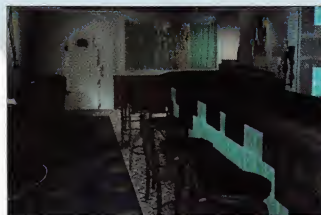
As with many others in the genre, TBD is not going to be a game for the kiddies - the content is most definitely aimed at a mature audience and though there don't seem to be too many graphic scenes of violence or sex, the storyline alone would seem to put it in the mature rating class. Fans of James Ellroy will already have an understanding of the background to the Black Dahlia case from back in the 1940's, but apart from the basics of the case there are few similarities between the book and the game. Dubbed the 'Torso Slayer', America's first (recorded) serial killer used to enjoy killing his or her victims seemingly at random and then chopping up



their bodies and leaving their bits and pieces in industrial wasteland, and in real life the killer has never been officially caught. The most famous of his murders was that of Elizabeth Short, an aspiring actress and sometime whore (probably), and it was the sight of her dismembered body that prompted one reporter to dub her as 'The Black Dahlia'.

The supernatural Hitler

The actual game isn't so concerned with catching the Torso Slayer - or at least it doesn't seem so on the surface. Instead, you play the part of Jim Pearson, an agent in the newly formed 'OCI', the Office of the Coordinator of Information, which investigates potential subversives working for Nazi Germany. As has been theorised before, Adolf Hitler and his nearest and dearest were fans of the Occult. Well, some of the more elaborate theories have taken this interest and combined it with Hitler's almost precognitive ability to predict when and



Cinematic adventure have come a long way - thankfully. This looks like another good one



where to strike in the early days of the war and come up with the idea that the reason for Hitler's success was based on his affiliations with the supernatural. Perhaps in reality it's not so believable, but in terms of this game it works well - blending the line between fantasy and fact convincingly and portraying a believable world and scenarios therein. We haven't yet seen a fully playable version of the game, but the demo looks great, with photo-realistic scenery, a

couple of nice puzzles (that at least sort of fit in with the plot), some very nice cinematics, and Dennis Hopper makes an appearance as well - which isn't all that startling because he actually owns a share of Take 2 Interactive. People who live for twitch games like Quake aren't perhaps suited to something such as this, but for the adventure enthusiast this is definitely one to keep an eye out for - and we'll give you the full story soon.

Gareth Jones



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Aironauts

Category	Ocean/Red Lemon
Players	1-4
Publisher	Aracade/Sim
Available	April

The race is on as development teams try to out-design each other. This is a real wacky game idea, but still looks like a totally radical, high technology game. Red Lemon's arcade, fun-sim game could well entice a few joystick wagglers. First up, you must choose from a large list of contestants that have been superbly detailed and designed. Each inmate/contestant has differing dynamics and attributes. One may be fast and agile but has little defence, while another will be a power house that won't go anywhere fast.

In Aironauts the player has the chance to take to the skies on powered gliders and compete against crazed killers to become the ultimate Aironauts champion. Aironauts is the TV game show of the future - like 'Gladiators' with carnage and



destruction. Criminals with nothing to lose but their life sentences dogfight over some of the world's most infamous prisons for viewers' entertainment in the vain hope of freedom. Aironauts is about action and the contestants are encouraged by the shows host - Bob McGuffin - to complete tasks that will involve shooting, bombing, strafing, stealing and stunts. The game is full 3D and will support a myriad of camera angles.

Aironauts' gameplay and objectives are ever evolving, but the



onus is on flying a glider against a series of opponents and doing some really amazing flying moves and stunts, aiming to be the best around.

Utilising real physics, the environments are fully interactive with a high level of collision detection, but this has been enhanced to allow the

gameplay to continue, rather than bashing against walls all the time.

The game can be likened to the N64 game Pilotwings, as you can fly over thermals to gain height. You can use boosters, but they won't last long and you will have to recharge them. You can also land in the

game and run around to explore environments.



With a developer's name like 'Red Lemon', you'd have to expect something pretty good

iPanzer '44

Category	War-sim / strategy
Players	1-4
Publisher	I-Magic/Charybdis
Available	March

The follow-up title to the award-winning iM1A2 Abrams tank game, iPanzer '44 will put you in command of the best medium tanks - be it American, Russian and German, during the climactic campaigns of 1944. You can now experience first hand the differences between the American M4A3-76HV "Sherman", the PzKw V G "Panther" of Germany, or the T-34/85 from Russia.

To be honest a tank is a tank, but we are well informed there are major differences between them all. iPanzer '44 is a realistic simulation accurately depicting the interiors, controls and capabilities of three different tanks. Separate views for: hull crewmen (driver and bow machine-gunner), turret (gunner and commander), unbuttoned TC (tank commander exposed in the top hatch).

Action with quite a few strategic elements is on hand. Riding around at snail's pace is boring, but the developers have tried to be entertaining and so all the exciting parts of real combat should bring the game to life. The inside of the tanks are kept to a minimum, well that is the reality of things, as controls are very basic in real life.

iPanzer '44 includes multiple



difficulty levels & game settings: You pick the enemy's level of competence. Select from various levels of realism/difficulty in operating your tank, allowing players of all abilities and experience to enjoy the simulation.

As you would expect accurately detailed terrain, using realistic



scaled battlefields - more than you could see in any one campaign - gives added appeal. iPanzer '44 allows the player to select a level of command depending on their strategic and tactical preference: Choose "Captain" to organise and lead multiple platoons through an entire campaign. Choose "Lieutenant" to command just one platoon and leave campaign management to the computer.

Plenty of research has gone into the making of this game, such as interviewing tanks operators, sourcing material from museums, and also getting the help from the US Army, ensuring that the right amount of authenticity is portrayed.

Yeah, sure, aspiring tank commanders can drive around and shoot other tanks, but the real test is reverse parking it back at HQ



Blade

Category	RPG/Action
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Rebel Act / Gremlin
Available	1st quarter 1998

From Spanish developers Rebel Act, this is billed as a mixture of Prey meets Quake with splashes of Riven, fully utilising the latest technology. Already the team are working on Blade 2!

A brief scenario is that a Dragon is menacing the four kingdoms and the aim for the player is to destroy it with magical weapons that you must find throughout the massive play area. The player will first face a powerful magician and his servants, but the race is on to grab the weapons for both sides are after them, so guile and skill is essential to get past this stage.

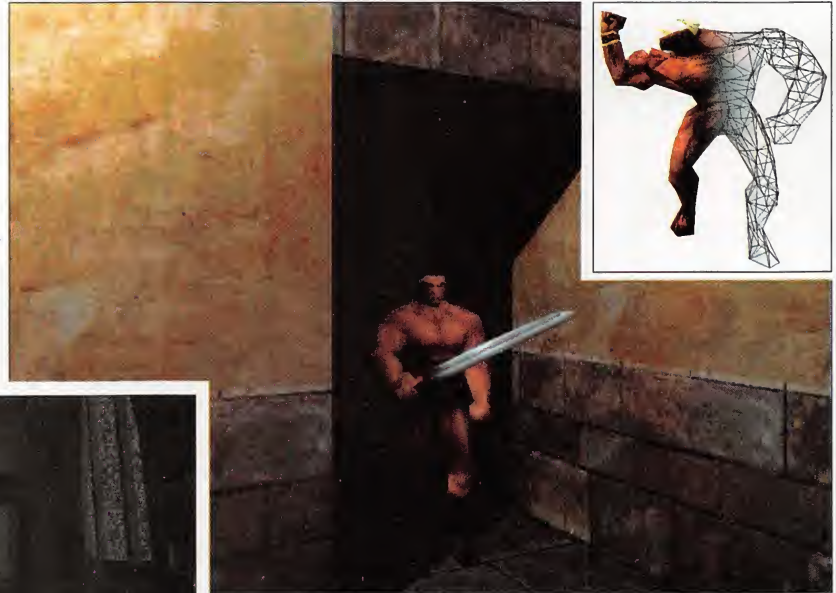
Blade is divided into 5 levels: - In the first one, the player has to prove the existence of the Dragon and this is split into 4 sub stages where you will be able to find some really tasty equipment to aid your progress fur-

ther into the game. Next up you will face the main allies of the Magician. The fighting has all the grace and feel of Tekken, whilst there



are still some hidden cerebral surprises.

Although the action is non stop, you must search the land for many artifacts and interact with an interesting cast of characters. The climax of the game will see you facing the Magician in the final confrontations, where all the spells and weapons you have gathered through the



RPG/Action fighting games are suddenly becoming all the rage...fine by us!

levels will come in hand.

Blade also offers interaction with non-player characters as well as the scenery, where walls can be smashed down, bottles broken, etc. With a neat AI engine it will ensure all the cast have brains so the challenge will be tailored to please even the best of players and so merely attacking someone is just not

good enough as they will be able to suss your moves throughout and act accordingly.

To balance the action, where marauding bandits will be waiting to ambush you, you can buy, sell and even repair weapons, plus there are traps and devious puzzles littered around the lush and mysterious landscapes so using your brain is important. Blade's visual appeal is one that will instantly grab the attention of the player.



Liberation Day

Category	War / Strategy
Players	1-4 + network
Publisher	I-Magic / Micromeq
Available	April

The follow up to Fallen Haven, Liberation Day comes from Canadian developers Micromeq. Much like Fallen Haven, Liberation Day is a turn based game made up of two different levels, a strategy phase where the player builds up his city and defense perimeter and decides where to invest his new found technology.

This is followed by tactical battles, where the player moves his combat units individually or in group to attack the enemy, or to accomplish a special mission like escorting an important convoy to a preset destination. These battles are very important since they are the means by which the player acquires new resources and steals alien technology. All in all, the campaign is composed of 50 different scenarios with another 50 variations, so no two campaigns are alike. Deathmatch

games also have a pool of about a dozen different scenarios for 2 player frenzy. The setting is D Day in space and the year is 3016. Being futuristic, there are no rigid boundaries and a wealth of inventive resources are at the players disposal.

Being set in the future opens the rules, which can be tailored to make gameplay more appealing. In this game, you have genetic bombs and giant tank



The original fallen haven was a disappointment, but here many of the weaknesses are addressed

eating worms - which would be very difficult to explain in a modern setting.

Appealing strategy war games are nothing new, so what is the new slant? Well, beside the obvious, like more units and scenarios and of course network play, you can take the battle to Air and Sea units instead of just Land units. Some units have special abilities like crossing forests, for the trooper. Also added is the concept of automated units. They are units that are not present on the map and do not need constant intervention from the player, therefore eliminating that aspect of micro-management. If the player wants to have a bridge over a river, he just calls an engineer to build one for him and waits for the helicopter to bring one over, whilst being careful that there are no Anti Aircraft artillery in range. To win you have take control of the whole planet which ain't easy as each mission is tough!

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REDLINE

Category Action/Adventure
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Accolade
Available Mid 1998



Until now, we hadn't heard a single thing about it, and we only stumbled onto the website by chance, but if the promise of the game is borne out by the final product we're predicting this will be a huge game. The storyline is fairly intricate and involved, but what you as a player end up doing is driving around in your car or running around on foot with a variety of very tasty weaponry taking out your opposition. Sort of Interstate '76 meets Quake - both the driving and walking parts will be equally important, and there'll be around 12 cars and 20 different types of weapons to choose from. Every 3D card available will be supported, in fact you'll have to have one to play.

FINAL FANTASY VII

Category RPG
Players 1
Publisher Eidos
Available Mid 1998

The PlayStation, while being scorned and ridiculed by the majority of the gaming community, has had a few games that have translated well to the PC. Final Fantasy VII is arguably the best game on the console to



date, meaning it should be even better once it's been converted. Japanese RPG masters Squaresoft spent a long time on this game, and it shows; acres of oohh-aahh inspiring graphics, a plot more involved than anything in Hollywood, and a game-world bigger than that Ben guy. The characters are very stylish too, and with a completion time of 30+ hours you'll grow to love them. FFFVII suffers a little from being a bit linear, but the experience is more like watching an epic adventure story unfold, not just "go here-find this-open that-talk to him-fight it".

DOMINION

Category C&C Clone
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Ion Storm
Available Mid/Late 1998



Big things are expected from Ion Storm, the company co-created by ex-id software guru John Romero, with titles like Daikatana eagerly anticipated. Dominion is another title being developed by Ion Storm, and is another in the real time strategy genre. What does it offer that's new? Not a lot, really. 4 races will be competing on the same planet, each with their own abilities and weaknesses. Resolutions of up to 1280 x 1024 will be supported, and the units will be modelled in 3D. Other than that, it all bears a striking resemblance to C&C - units include soldiers, commando's, engineers, though there are heaps of mechanised units as well. More info when we get it.

MECH COMMANDER

Category Action/Adventure
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Microprose
Available Mid/Late 1998



Yes, it's another FASA Mechwarrior game - but this time instead of taking the first person perspective they're going for an isometric viewpoint, which allows for greater control over a number of units. Missions will require you to jump back and forth between different locations as different groups of your mechs get into situations, and before each mission you'll have to kit out your mechs as per usual, as well as deciding which pilot to put in which mech. And all your pilots will be like real people, with growing levels of experience as you use them and different abilities. It's still early days yet, but chances are good that this will be another quality game to add to the Mechwarrior universe.

GRIM FANDANGO

Category Graphic Adventure
Players 1
Publisher LucasArts
Available Late 1998



Grim Fandango seems to be a bit of a departure from other LucasArts adventures - pitched at a much more mature and dare-I-say-intelligent gamer. It looks like a dark surreal noir style adventure, based on some strange Mexican folklore (!), and bears a comparison to films such as Chinatown, The Big Sleep, and Casablanca - all presented in the inimitable Lucas Arts cartoony style. The storyline is that you are Manny, a 'travel agent in the land of the dead' who takes people from the land of the living to his world. Unwittingly he uncovers a major embezzlement operation by his superiors - and from there things just get even weirder. Looks great, sounds supremely twisted and strange, and it's from LucasArts. We're holding our breaths for this one - more soon.

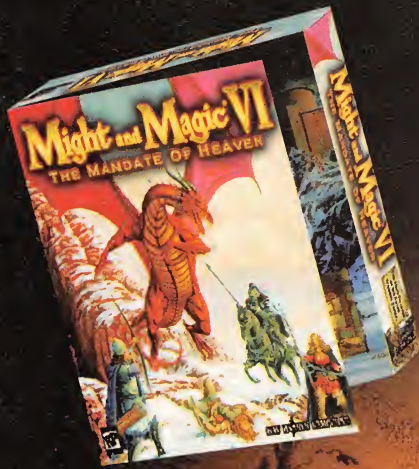
ANARCHY

Category Strategy/Action
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Microsoft/Terratools
Available April

From Terratools, this is just one of Microsoft's hot titles that might see them emerge as serious publishers of



games, not merely application software. Anarchy throws you into a hostile, unknown 3D environment, where you have to get out of the level alive. You have at your disposal a heavily armoured host station, which has the ability to create jets, tanks, helicopters, AA guns, kamikaze jeeps, power stations, radar stations - controlled by their own AI, or the user. With the help of his vehicle army, the user will endeavour to capture power stations to improve his energy household, and to ultimately blast the local enemy forces into pieces.



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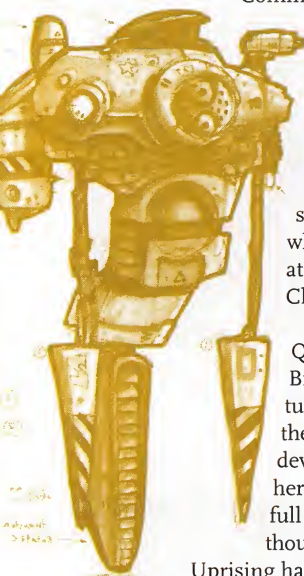


ISSUE 8



ISSUE 13

Now the fun REALLY starts



Coming down from the impact of Christmas games hasn't been easy. We were all prepared for a December and January of total gaming. Instead though, what we actually ended up with was a highly forgettable gaming Christmas of 1997. There were highlights of course, I-War is a winner through and through, Monkey Island 3 is still keeping undesireables off the streets, Longbow 2 did it for flight sim fans, while Quake 2 both made it all worthwhile, while at the same time highlighting the "rushed for Christmas" syndrome.

At PCPP we've always looked forward to the 1st Quarter releases far more than those slated for Big December. Now, the true gems are starting to turn up. Games that simply weren't going to make the Christmas action, so were held back by the developers so the games actually got finished. And here they come. We actually fully expect to have a full review of Falcon 4.0 next issue! Who'd of thought... For now though, the crew are all playing

Uprising hard. It's the game we've all been waiting for; an amazing looking and fast 3D world where tank combat is mixed with RTS-style strategy. Awesome. And so is Battlezone. With only one copy in the office, the reviewer Hendry is getting just a little bored with various staffers wandering past his desk every hour, wondering if he's finished with it yet... Our time will come!

Another Wing Commander game turns up to reassure those that doubted the world hasn't changed. Neither has the Wing Commander formula. Sure, less FMV makes us reviewers happy, but aside from some stunning graphics, the gameplay-style and physics of the ships remain as they did way back when the original Wing Commander blew us away. It'll sell millions...

There's something for everyone's taste in games after Christmas, so soak up another fine month of gaming and have fun.

THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

95%+	PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.
90-94%	GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.
80-90%	A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 months time.
60-80%	Competant and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.
40-60%	Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift
0-40%	Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible

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BATTLEZONE

"The first ever 3D game" returns to us on PC as a realtime strategy/tank simulation. It's Mechwarrior's graphics with C&C's resource management. Read on...

Ever been playing Command & Conquer, and said: "If that was me driving that tank, it would have been a whole different story... if only I had more control!" Well buckle up, chum! You're at the helm in this 3D strategic combat sim.

The Russians are still coming

The story concerns a reversal in history, to the Cold War days, when the US and Russia were competing in the Space Race, only it seems that the research became a purely military agenda, with weapons research being the foremost priority. We have now conquered space, but the war rages on. Now, the most fiercely contested assets are the relics of Alien spacecraft, from which



new technology can be gleaned. You can either play the Yanks or the Russians, each having slightly different technology, objectives and missions. Your primary function is defending bases on planets with little gravity and zero atmosphere. You are in command of all the buildings and the units therein. As such, you must prepare for invasions, repair damaged units, build sentry guns and generally kick ass for your country.

Battlezone drops you straight into the action, in control of a Hovering



She nukes me, she nukes me not... the 3D lie of this installation makes an inviting clustered target





A Wingman awaits your suicide order

Tank type thing, which has the agility of a mountain gazelle, thanks to its bed of suspensors that keep it permanently aloft, about a metre off the ground. It's coated with attitude jets so you can strafe and jump ala mechwarrior. Nice piece of machinery. Once in charge of this beast, you have to cruise around and follow orders from the General, who has a direct audio comlink to your craft. The voice characterisations are excellent, very

Hollywood-esque snarling American buddies and sneering, heavily accented Russian comrades.

You're there, dude

Typically, you start with a Recycler, which needs to be installed on a geothemic geyser (thankfully numerous) to get power. From there, you can build Scavengers, which will collect the other resource avail-



Don't forget the SPF 15+! Scorching laser effects are Battlezone's trademark. Also above are some shots from the original. How things have changed

able: scrap bio-thermic metal left over from previous conflicts. Once you have resources, the Recycler can build a range of secondary devices, which in turn allow construction of 3rd generation equipment, and so on. At the highest level you can build Huge AT-AT style "walkers", long range bombers and gigantic defensive emplacements that can target units kilometres away. Of course there is a voluminous number of light and heavy tanks, scouts, carriers and support vehicles. It's interesting, for example, laying down a sentry turret in a valley, because you can drive



around the nearby hillsides and observe the field of fire it achieves in any given position. Also, you must designate the position visually: a wireframe projected over the landscape indicates the desired position. You can also assemble cameras for observation and espionage.

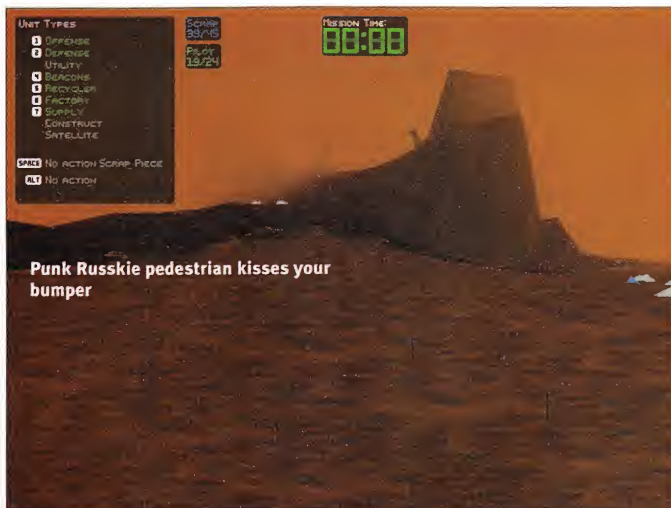
The great part about the 3D landscape is the extreme importance that the location of units has: if you read the geography right, you can create nigh-impenetrable fortifications. For instance forcing the enemy walkers to travel through a narrow ravine to reach you, and filling it up with 5-ton explosive claymores beforehand is tactical glee.

At all times you have a 3 dimensional landscape map in the lower left corner, which shows a top-down view of geographical features and also units, waypoints and enemies. This is a really useful and effective tool, both for navigation and appreciating the aspect of an enemy attack.

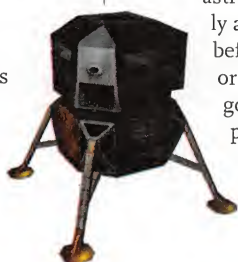
You make the difference

You also naturally treat your offensive units as wingmen: you can give them orders to escort you, fire at will and travel to waypoints. Naturally, during battle you are the major force to contend with, just the fact that you attempt to dodge enemy fire makes you much more likely to survive enemy encounters than your inflexible counterparts. They really need a lot of babysitting, or they tend to get killed. You spend a lot of time charging across the landscape at turbo velocity to crash an incursion and add your firepower to the fracas so that you can make a difference.

BattleZone has those little details that indicate a lot of attention was paid to the finite elements. Like when an enemy unit drives through a crater they drop off the radar display momentarily. The way the enemies vary their attack each time you play, depending on the actions you take. The isometric satellite view, which shows a fast wireframe of everything in realtime. And also when your craft gets destroyed, you are auto-ejected microseconds before the shrapnel starts to fly, and can continue the battle on foot if you so desire. You have the advantage of stealth in



this approach, and you have a long-range sniper rifle with telescopic optics to nail your target from outside visual range, as well as a short-range rapid fire blaster. Likewise, among the remnants of enemy craft you will occasionally find pedestrian astronauts, who foolishly attack with pistols, before being run over or being softly kissed goodbye by an armour piercing shell. At the beginning of some missions you will



start out on foot and select a vehicle most suitable for toasting the opposition.

As far as interface is concerned, it's well designed and quite intuitive, allowing fairly



rapid control of things. You have to get used to a lot of events happening beyond your field of vision, so your orders might be underway, or perhaps not!! You have to weigh up unit supervision and base defence in order to control things effectively.

Cool weaponry

And it plays well, too! Frighteningly, Battlezone is a deep strategy game, and a decent 3D action experience simultaneously. The closest any other game came to this achievement was Magic Carpet, but that had nothing like the strategic elements at work here. It's a bit like Mechwarrior, combat wise, only faster. But I would probably give Battlezone the prize for superior special effects. Naturally there is



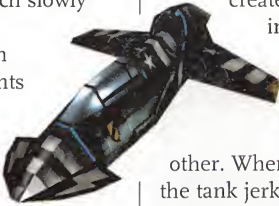
a wide range of armaments: rockets, cannons, machine guns, howitzers. One weapon in particular, the Flash Cannon sends a blinding beam of light scorching across the landscape, leaving a trail of white-hot rock where it passed, which slowly fades as it cools. Naturally if you catch any political opponents in the beam, they lose all the moisture from their craft and bodies in the time it takes to blink. This makes it kinda difficult for their heart to beat, and stuff like that. They don't pose much danger anymore, apart from threatening to ignite you if you venture too close to their 'flambe' remains. And the graphics overall are

extremely acceptable, with particularly well-composed, really solid landscape, with undulating hills, valleys and crater basins. And with a bundled level editor, expect some really revolutionary scenarios from the gaming community, or create your own! Excellent impact collision code means you never have objects overlapping, or getting "stuck" in each other. When you hit something, the tank jerks to the side and your vision blurs and distorts momentarily from the G-effects. Now, for all this, we naturally expect 3D acceleration, but for software only you would really want to be running a i66 with 30 megs of RAM minimum to play it properly. It creates

a pretty heavy workload for your system, which without 3D acceleration, really requires a P200 to get a nice smooth framerate.

This game is aimed quite heavily at the multi-player market, and it would should be damned good in that capacity. This game is one of those groundbreakers that introduces a genre. Sim-Strategy? Got a nice ring to it!

Hendry Saunders



Hasta la vista, gringo! The most solid of all offensive warcraft: The Walker



Category Tank combat sim/ RTS
Players 1-4 Network, Modem/null Modem and Internet play
Publisher Activision
Price \$89.95
Rating TBA
Available Now
For A technically deep strategy title, and an excellently playable Tank sim at the same time. Cool, functional graphics capture the mood, and animate very nicely.

Against Not much, only perhaps more cosmetic elements and pretty weapon effects would have been nice, it also needs a fully Ninja PC for play without 3D acceleration.

Need Win95, 2xCD-ROM, P90, 16Mb RAM, 50 Mb Disk Space,

Want Direct 3D hardware graphics accelerator, PCI graphics, P200, 32Mb RAM

3D DIRECT 3D SUPPORT WILL BE BUNDLED IN THE BOX (HEAR, HEAR). AS WELL AS 3DFX, YEAHHHH! EVERYONE WITH A GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR WILL BE ABLE TO ENJOY THIS ONE.



WING COMMANDER PROPHECY

For many PC gamers, the very first Wing Commander was the one that hooked them. Bringing life to the infant Sound Blaster and finally providing decent space combat, this is one game the world over knows. After messing with the natural order of things, Origin finally gets the show back on the road...

There's been many a memorable moment over the Wing Commander series. Wing Commander I showed that, yes, we could really indulge in interstellar combat on our glorified 286 word processor machines, and what a joy it was. Wing Commander II added a voice expansion pack and 8 bit Sound Blaster cards everywhere sang the tune of a Kilrathi death scream. Then came Wing III. Our cute little 14" monitors became cinema screens, with Mark Hamill not being Luke, Ginger Lynn not removing her clothes and the Kilrathi taking on the disturbing appearance of people wearing twisted Humphrey B. Bear suits. Number four in the series wasn't a disaster, but a jumbo sized popcorn and a choc-top were more important system requirements than a joystick. Long FMV cut scenes and too bloody many of them frankly. With Chris Roberts off to Hollywood with a movie script in one hand and a Tequilla Sunrise in the other, the Wing Commander team have gotten back to basics. Prophecy has less emphasis on FMV and more on dogfighting, with a new alien menace. An alien threat that even the Kilrathi have nightmares over.

Mark Hamill is a ship of the desert

Members of the Mark Hamill fan club, be prepared for the biggest surprise since you found out you-know-who, was the father of you-know-who back in that other sci-fi series. Heroic Mr Hamill/Christopher Blair now takes up a secondary role in the plot, but also has



some rather odd things happen to him in the story. That's enough of a spoiler. You now assume the role of Lt. Lance Casey, a fresh faced cadet straight out of fighter school academy. You're assigned to the newly commissioned Mega-Carrier the Midway, and things couldn't be better. A posting on a

Renowned sc-fi artist Syd Mead is responsible for the fine looking alien spacecraft. Pity he wasn't allowed a stab at the dismal cockpit design

prestigious ship, it's peacetime and there isn't even the slightest hint of the extermination of humanity just around the corner. Well, that is until a Kilrathi ship is found destroyed and its inhabitants ripped to shreds. A logical move at this stage would be to realise that the life of a lumberjack on planet Bigtree is probably more promising than fighting with whatever can rip a Kilrathi to shreds, but it's a heroes life that you signed up for.

Mark Hamill smells very bad

From peacetime to state of emergency, the Midway and her



The video is mercifully short, but is still cursed with Origin's love of interlacing



crew are stuck behind enemy lines as the aliens have opened up a wormhole and are positioning themselves for an invasion. As the story unfolds, the Midway lurches from crisis to crisis until (hopefully) reinforcements arrive and the tide of war tilts to mankind. Old acquaintances such as Maniac (played in usual fine form by Tom Wilson) and Rachel (Ginger Lynn) star in the story and the Wing Commander style is ever present. In between flying missions you wander into the bar and chat with character X, which pushes along story element Y. The big improvement is not having to trudge through corridors looking for that "Important" conversation as was previously the case. It's just the Bar, the Command Room and the Cockpit. Good stuff. The only poor part of the movie section is Ginger Lynn. Now, I've got nothing against ex-porn queens crossing into CD-ROM games, power to them, but her part is very annoying. Each time you return from a mission she either bags you for bringing back a damaged ship, or gives you a wry "Come

hither young laddie" look if you perform well. I'm afraid old Ginger fell victim to my escape key most of the time. Only a small nuisance though, the FMV section of Prophecy is professional and adds atmosphere and setting to the game without overshadowing the cockpit action.

Would you like to ride Mark Hamill?

I remember a time when the graphics engine of Wing Commander games was sprite based. Seeing Kiltrathi ships being represented by blobs of low res colour was not really that impressive, especially since X-Wing arrived and introduced a much more realistic looking polygon way of doing things. Forget the dark days of sprites, Prophecy looks absolutely bril-

liant. If you have a 3DFX Voodoo card, I'll skip the usual 3 sentences of "Oh my God...blah blah blah" the light sourcing, missile trails and smooth frame rates make up some of the best graphics doing the rounds in any game at the moment. A Direct 3D compliant card also gives impressive

results, but some of the fancy-pants light sourcing isn't as impressive. Software mode still looks great, and easily secures Prophecy as the best looking Wing Commander game ever. The two standout effects are without a doubt the huge, really huge, Capital ships that you can fly alongside and glory at the sense of size and the Swarmer Missile. Shoot one of these babies and watch the brilliant four way warhead just streak towards the opponent, the ultimate in stylized destruction. Lurking under all these stunning visuals is gameplay not too far removed from Prophecy's forebears. The flight model is still non-existent. Throttling down to instantaneous dead stops and left/right turns with no inertia is still a bit of a disappointment considering the extent the graphics have been upgraded. On the other hand, Wing Commander is aimed at fans that want heart racing thrills, not a Newtonian physics simulator. Having a missile lock warning flashing, with two bogies on your six firing away (cockpit shaking from incoming hits) and trying to avoid the turret fire of an enemy mothership, it's probably good that we don't have to worry about momentum.



The polygons - I mean spaceships, are HUGE, adding much to the epic nature of the game





Sheik Yerbouti likes Mark Hamill

The new enemy is heavily built up during the opening scenes as some sort of apocalyptic end of all that is good and wholesome sort of foe. Kilrathi prophecy predicts fire and brimstone and when Commodore Blair is asked what the new menace is, he just grimly replies "Death". Well, it's a disappointment that the new species are really just an insect version of the Kilrathi. Yes they have organic looking new ships that do very cool things like split into different attacking drones when fired upon, but they fly in a similar manner to the Kilrathi and even scream battlecries in that all familiar "I die with honour", "Why do you resist" etc etc. Not much is learned about the critters over the course of the game either, we know they're evil, that's a gimme. We know they're as ugly as a Praying Mantis piloting a spaceship should be. We certainly know that they should win an award for the best looking ships, being modeled on earth sea creatures with tentacles being the order of the day. What we don't know is their connection with the Kilrathi, where they're from or most importantly any hidden motivations. Mostly in games I don't give much credence to the story, but this is a Wing Commander game and the story is always a motivation in com-

pleting missions, and I was eager to know more about these bugs from space. As it happens Prophecy is the first in a new trilogy of games, so we'll have to be satisfied with learning more about the bugs as the series progresses.

Mark Hamill's always thirsty

The two biggest downers are the relatively simple mission structure, and the bouncing ship syndrome. As with previous instalments most of the missions are fly through waypoint A, B and C and exterminate all enemies present. There are some deviations in this pattern, like scanning an asteroid field and bombing runs on enemy mother ships (pee pants

time) but even the years old X-Wing had more varied missions than on offer here. My biggest gripe and to be honest it doesn't bother a lot of people is the way mid space collisions result in both ships bouncing off each other. Being silly enough not to avoid a head on collision with an enemy giant cruiser should result in destruction, but it doesn't and it detracts from what is otherwise some very exciting dogfighting.

Mark Hamill only knows one joke

Even with it's faults, I had a fantastic time with Prophecy. The sheer speed and high action coupled with the intense visuals is just destined to wear some

Only the 3Dfx version allows the full use of all graphics options, but it is by no means essential

grooves into many a joystick. Calling help from wingmen and watching them hone in on your targets guns blazing, love that. In most missions you are accompanied into battle by multiple squadrons, and you really feel part of a large scale military engagement. If you're a Wing Commander fan, get this game immediately you will love it. If you own a 3Dfx card and worship gorgeous graphics, get this game. Wing Commander newbies should give it a go, but don't expect gritty hard core space combat like I-War, Prophecy is designed to awaken the joystick waggler in you.

Pete Sharpe



Category Space combat
Players 1
Publisher Origin
Price \$89.95
Rating MA15+
Available Now

For Fast and furious all the way, the action never lets up. Oh Nelly, those graphics.

Against Initially announced, Origin ended up ditching the multiplayer component.

Need Win95, 32Mb RAM, P166 -Without 3D card, P133 -With 3D card.

Want A get down to business joystick, 3Dfx card, 400Mb Hard Drive space.

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UPRISING

Just when you thought it was safe to start loving Real Time Strategy games again, along comes a title with all the depth of an RTS, but with a funky 1st-person mode to spark it all up.

There are few enough constants in my life at the moment, but cereal will always taste good late at night, parents will ring at just the wrong time, flatmates will never wash up properly, the neighbours will always start their home renovations with a jackhammer at 6 am the morning after a particularly excessive night of alcohol consumption, mosquitos will always find a way inside, and at least once a month I'll get handed yet another Real Time Strategy game for review, most of which will suck harder than a black hole. For these reasons and more (oh so many more) It's very

refreshing indeed to have an RTS style game that a) tries something different, and b) is actually very good. Hats off to the lads and lasses at 3DO for cheering me up after a particularly annoying morning (and boy, did I need cheering up). I popped down to the local store and bought a nice big box of Coco Pops, took the phone of the hook, carefully arranged the dirty dishes in the middle of the lounge room floor where they'd be sure to notice it (eventually), kicked the neighbour's car (didn't achieve anything, but it made me feel better), took a couple of b-b-b-beroccas to pep me up, locked my door and

settled in to play this quality game for a few days - and it was well worth it. Here's why;

A real RTS

The only other genre that approaches RTS (I know, I know, the growing sentiment that RTS isn't the best term to apply to this genre is one that I agree with, but it'll do for now, ok? Deal with it). Where was I? Yeah, the only genre that approaches RTS games in terms of the amount of clones are first person shooters, and seeing as Uprising is a combination of a first person shooter with an RTS game you might be excused for thinking that some marketing

nob has taken a look at the sales figures for Quake and Red Alert and said to the programmers "go make me a game like them, and we'll all be instant millionaires!" but it's not, nothing of the sort in fact. Uprising deserves to be examined on it's own merits - though it does combine many of the good points from the best games from either genre, the game works well enough, and there's enough originality in there, for it not to be considered as a derivative.

The storyline is nothing outstanding though, you're part of a rebel uprising on one of the many planets that Earth forces have colonised. As per usual, those in power have oppressed the hoi polloi for too long, and since someone in the resistance was lucky enough to steal a prototype from the Imperium of a mobile command base tank the resistance has become more organised and overt. You have been chosen to take command of the tank, and to command the troops from within your craft - as per usual it's up to you to take on the Imperium on planet after planet, and hopefully

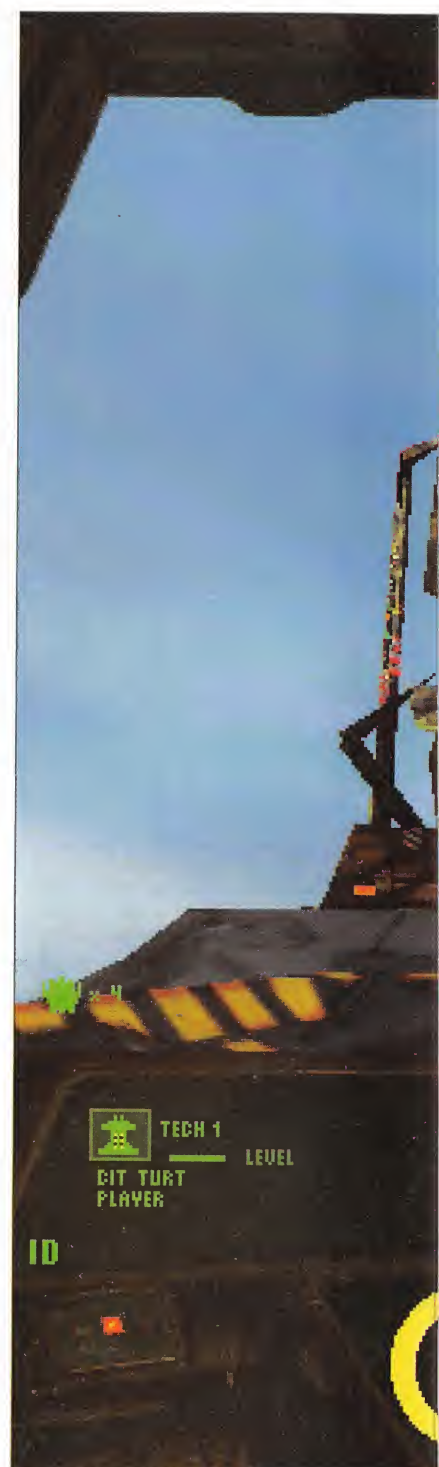
crush them completely and strike a blow for all the little people, blah blah blah.

Free-choice missions

At the start of the campaign, you first pick the planet you



Cool explosions, 3Dfx pretty graphics, and missions that blend action and the need for strategy. A winner!



(right) One of the 'hot spots' scattered throughout each map
 (below) Kind of silly, but at least you get three lives each level
 (bottom) The citadel, the main building at each hot spot, with some very chunky guns





One of the few things holding Uprising back from a 90+ score is the AI, which is OK, but nothing special (witness tanks in top pic. "I'm over here, guys!")

want to start upon, and when successful you'll receive an award in the form of credits, which can then be used for upgrades. Obviously enough, it's best to start with those planets with little resistance to the rebels and eventually move up to the hotly contested planets. And 'hotly' contested is a pretty accurate term too. You see each planet has places where energy can be harnessed for teleportation of units and vehicles over small distances, known as 'hot spots'. Each planet has a number of hot



spots, and it's your task to take control of them and then build factories for unit production. Each hot spot can hold up to four buildings, and you can create such things as tank factories, soldier facilities, bomber bays, power dredging utilities and so on. Each unit has different abilities, and they don't just pop out of the factory once they have been completed. Instead, from the HUD of your tank you're notified that the unit has completed production and is ready for deployment. Deployment is

simple, from your mobile command centre tank you just target an enemy installation or piece of turf that you want protected and press the corresponding hotkey, at which point the nominated unit will be instantly teleported in. And surprisingly this actually works quite well, with each different unit performing a separate task. Tanks, for instance, don't move very fast or very far from where you drop them, soldiers aren't very good against other troops but they are excellent at taking out enemy buildings, bombers are terrible when attacked but if you can clear a path to their destination (they are the only unit that doesn't get teleported) their destructive capabilities are second to none.

Good plain FUN

And, get this, it's all done from a first person perspective. Because you're teleporting and directing units to one place, the first person interface with HUD functions perfectly well, though you can jump into one of your citadels (the main building at every hot spot site) from anywhere on the map if you are under attack. It may well sound like a weird way to control your troops, but it works, and your tank itself is kitted out with an excellent variety of weapons as well, so it's a potent strike force in itself (though you can't use it to attack buildings). Uprising is actually very well balanced in that you really do need to think out what units to produce, and

PLUS+

UPRISING
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www.3do.com
A patch is already available on 3DO's website for multi-player games, and there's a web forum for the game there as well.

where to place them, as well as when to use your tank and when to sit at the sidelines and just direct troops. All up, Uprising gets high marks for introducing a little variety into these stagnating genres, and in terms of playability, lastability, and just good plain fun, Uprising is a big time winner.

Gareth Jones

89%

Category	RTS/Action/1st person
Players	1-4 (IPX, modem)
Publisher	3DO
Price	\$89.95
Rating	MA15
Available	Now

For An excellent combination of a first person shooter with RTS elements, looks fantastic with the 3Dfx, opposition soldiers scream when you run over them in your tank. Excellent manual and training scenarios.

Against The missions could have had a little more depth, and perhaps a few more unit types might have been nice, but then again that might have complicated things too much.

Need P90, 2 x CD, 2Mb video card, 16 MB RAM, Win '95

Want P133, 6 x CD, 3Dfx, 32MB RAM

3D

SUPPORTS 3DFX, DIRECT3D, BUT NOT REQUIRED.

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**PC
CD
ROM**

CLASSIFICATION
TBA



F22-RAPTOR

Isn't it funny how a plane that isn't even in production has sparked off so many sims already? Claiming realism, but delivering arcade fun comes NovaLogic's second F-22 sim.

The first thing you'll realise when you jump in the cockpit and head for the clouds is that the controls and cockpit layout are almost identical. As you begin to ascend, you'll notice that the terrain rendering looks pretty similar to NovaLogic's original F22. Nothing different yet. Then you'll bank and say, "Christ, did the plane really move like that?" Either NovaLogic have cheerfully done away with concepts such as gravity, wind resistance, air-flow etc or this puppy flies like it's in space. You can execute sharp turns, rolls and flips and still manage to stay under 8G's, something that I haven't been able to do in any other flight sim without greying out. She's also practically un-stallable - you can fly at almost 20 degrees AOA while idling and still manage to fly level.

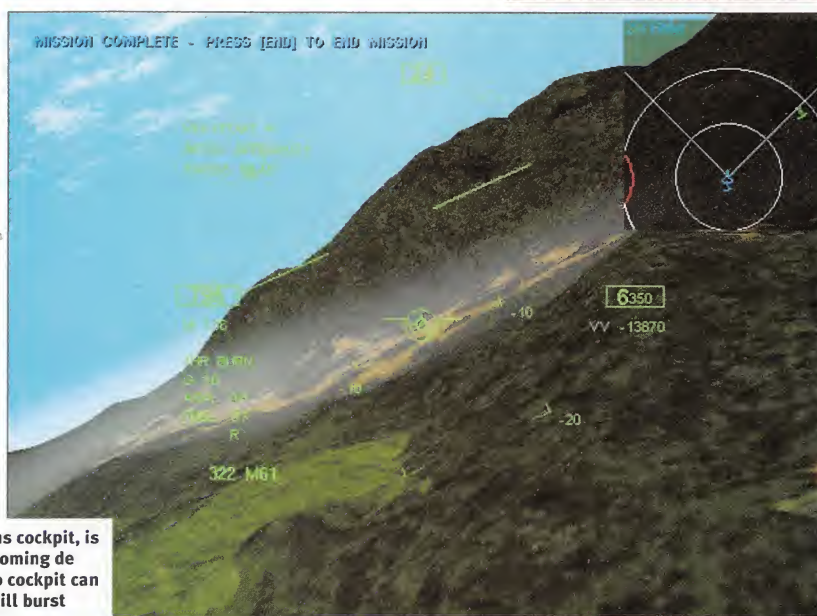
Point and shoot

This is the point where the hard-core fan will start to ask questions, and unfortunately (due to the fact that the F22 is not yet in production) not find

answers. If the flight dynamics in this sim are so much better than Lightning II, why does the plane feel like an arcade flyer? True, the F22 uses thrust vectoring (small vanes in the exhaust that change the direction of the thrust gases to improve manoeuvrability), but this just doesn't make it 'feel' right.

NovaLogic would also have us believe that there is very little for you to do as a pilot of the F22 except for fly and shoot, and even this is too easy. In terms of workload compared to Lightning II, all you really do is turn your radar on and off and adjust the range. The plane automati-

cally downloads data from the AWACS, auto-creates a shootlist and prioritises targets. Okay, so the plane may have the computing power of two Crays on board, but would it really be all that easy? The last feature that will disappoint fans of long,



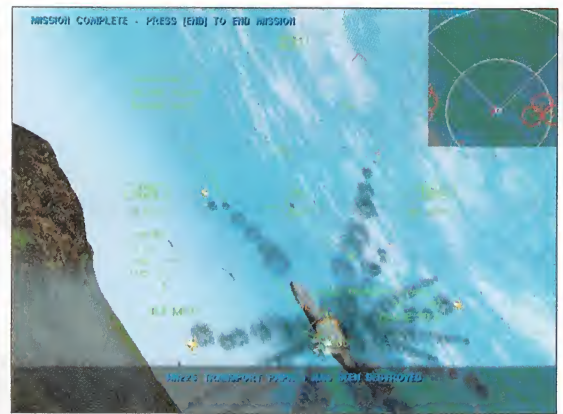
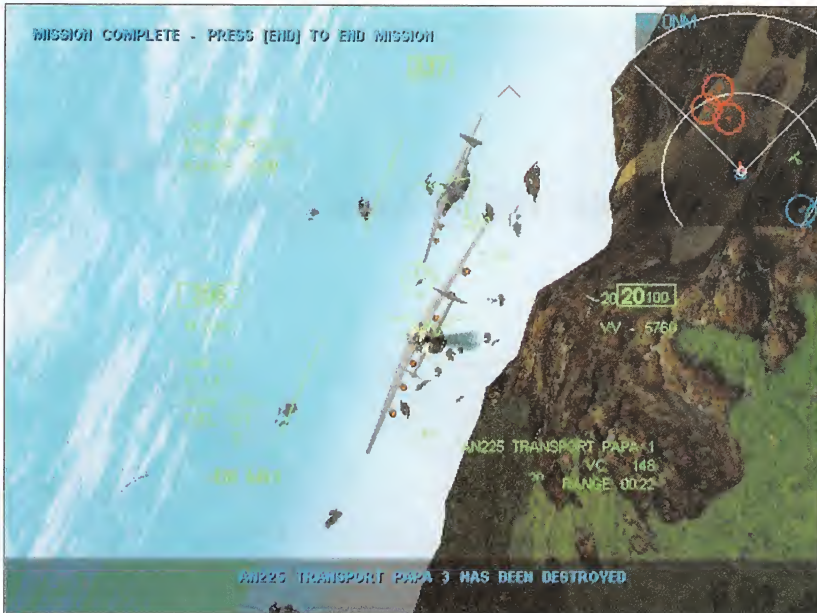
The full-screen HUD - sans cockpit, is fast & unfortunately becoming de rigour for sims. A pseudo cockpit can be selected, but it will still burst your reality bubble



drawn-out warfare is the lack of dynamic campaign play. Despite what the literature says, the missions are canned with the only variance being the amount of stores available and enemies present in subsequent missions. Fire too many AMRAAMs like a cowardly wuss and you'll have less in the next mission. Conversely, the more enemies you kill early, the less you have to face later on. This is all well and good, but it doesn't compare to the living battlefield you find in Jane's Longbow 2, so you don't feel like the tides of war are turning or anything.

No 3D support yet...

So what makes Raptor so much better than Lightning II? The graphics are nowhere near as cool as say JSF. True, the terrain looks awesome considering there is no 3D hardware support yet, but it's only a step up from Voxelspace (the technology used in the Comanche series) with



you jump in and play heaps of other pilots, much like a cross between Air



Warrior 3 and a Quakeworld server. NovaLogic have also promised that all future sims will act like 'plug-ins' to NovaWorld so you may be able to jump in as a JSF or even a chopper in future games. Now if only you could have Quake marines jumping in as infantry...

For me though, multiplayer turned into quite a sour affair. For the life of me, I couldn't get NovaWorld working with either of my ISP's because one only worked through a proxy server and the other had NovaWorld's port setting firewalled. Oh yeah, and you can forget your geeky LAN parties unless y'all are willing to splurge on a copy - Raptor requires a disc for each player!

In the end, Raptor has tried to do what so many sims before it have done - try to find a line between appealing to the hardcore crowd who want total realism, and those who just want to fly and shoot. There is no real way of telling if this is what the F22 really flies like, so for me (a semi-hard core flight simmer), Raptor is not much more than a spiffy arcade flyer with pretty, but not awesome PC graphics. That's why it gets the score I gave it.

George Argy

larger maps and different environments. The explosions are pretty much the same as Lightning, and the missile trails aren't that different. There is no lens flare or funky fog effects due to lack of hardware acceleration. For those who forked out good money for 3D hardware, I say wait for the patch to be released before buying, otherwise you may think it's only a (slightly) spruced up F22 Lightning II.

One thing I found less than impressive was the sound. The F22 is either completely vacuum sealed from the outside world, or NovaLogic forgot to bump up the sound factor. Cruising at 60-80% engine thrust, you cannot hear the engine at all and I constantly had to check my speakers. The afterburners sound cool though, as does the radio chatter in the campaigns.

Fly online

Definitely the most exciting thing about Raptor would have to be NovaWorld, NovaLogic's new online gaming service that lets



The superimposed radar is certainly functional, but again, doesn't exactly simulate realism



Nice colours & pretty lighting is this sims forte

PLUS+



74%

Category Flight sim
Players 1-16
Publisher NovaLogic
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Multiplay. Easy to fly. Graphics are still top notch without 3D support.

Against Multiplay. No 3D hardware support. Doesn't feel like a 'real' plane - will be too point and shoot for some.

Need P120, 16MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM

Want P200, 64MB RAM, Joystick/Throttle/Pedals



TANARUS

Sony enters the PC gaming fray with an online tank game set to blitz the net.

The Internet. That huge world wide network that, depending on your point of view, will either save humanity with a golden age of free flowing information or drown us in a sea of naughty Pamela Anderson photos. In between the extremes of an information renaissance and pornographic apocalypse there is the hype of chat rooms, the Web browsing tele and coming soon a toaster that butters your bread, whilst collecting your morning E-mail. Amongst all the hype we gamers can sit back with a wry smile on our faces. We know the future and it's online gaming. While cruising the Web has it's moments, what people really desire is to meet up with their fellow man on the other side of the world and crush, humiliate or simply out think them in some sort of very cool addictive game. There are



problems though. Lag, because it's getting increasingly difficult to shove enough information at sufficient speeds down a 33.6k modem across the Pacific Ocean. Then there is the scourge of the Online Wanker. These malcontents seem intent on wrecking



It's a simple idea, the graphics aren't spectacular, but the whole thing works really well - Tanarus rocks!

games through cheating (the infamous Diablo fiasco) or just stupid behaviour. Recent reports of mass serial killer type behaviour in Ultima Online being an unfortunate example. Into this fray steps Tanarus, a team-based futuristic tank sim that can hold its "Online only" tag with pride.

Tactical genius

If you're old enough, cast your

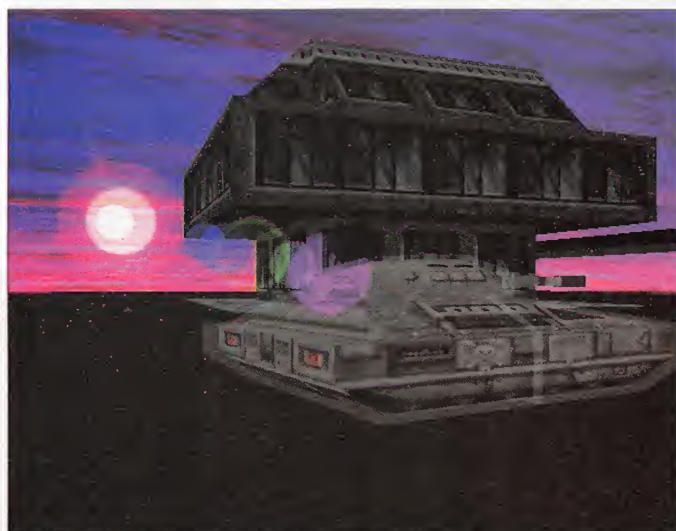
mind back to the 80's, past the pink shirts and skinny grey plastic ties, to a game called Battlezone. The idea was to pilot a tank around a vector graphics battlefield blowing up other tanks. Tanarus pushes this basic tank vs tank theme into what at times is an excellent base offense/defense battle situation. Hopping into one of five customizable tanks of your choice you leap into one of the many cityscape arenas on offer and join a team of other tank jockeys. Each arena contains one headquarters for each team, and numerous other mini neutral bases ripe for the plucking. Soon enough all of the neutral bases belong to team X, Y or Z and it becomes important to plan assaults on other team's newly acquired positions. Base capture just isn't a "Nah nah we got ya base" ego event, things go deeper than that. Tanks rely on batteries for power. Batteries run dry quickly. A conquered base emits power to nearby friendly tanks, whilst draining power from enemy tanks. Thus the



more bases controlled the further the range of yours and your team mate's tanks. The ultimate aim is to take over enough bases that your side gains range of the enemy HQ and can go for a flag steal, giving a victory and a lot of points per team member. Points are very important in Tanarus. They allow you to progress through the military ranks which increases prestige and fear in your opponents and grants access to high ranking experienced combat arenas.

It's a people game

This is all great fun. The city arenas, while consisting of basic ramps, platforms and cube buildings, make for an environment that caters for both sniping and close multi-tank engagements. If you're playing with co-operative team mates you'll be madly typing "Backup at H1 (co-ordinates for the radar map), enemy here!!!" and "Running for the flag, diversion needed" etc. One extremely memorable time was jumping into a game where two teams controlled equal amounts of territory, with a front line forming in the eastern part of the city. This battle for the eastern sector raged for two hours, as tanks would be destroyed they would restart at home base and then race back to the frontline, eventually though our team took control of the base in the sector and pushed the enemy out. We had turned the tide of the war and pushed closer towards the enemy HQ. Damn fantastic feeling as victory was secured in



a battle that was furious with a sense of purpose and place. On the otherhand, for every one of these brilliant moments there were a few too many games where team work was haphazard or there was a wanker attacking his own team members. This is the dark side of Tanarus, as with any online game it's only as good as the people you are playing with. It

has to be said that wankers don't get too far up the ranks, and thus an added incentive in becoming skilled is that eventually you'll be playing in the highly ranked arenas where strategy and teamwork are priority one.

Download it

Before you rush out and buy Tanarus, take note you must pay \$9.95 (U.S Dollars) a month using a credit card account. My advice to help buffer the monthly charge is to skip buying the retail boxed version. The full game can be downloaded from www.tanarus.com for free, with the only disadvantage being the omission of one type of tank (a hovercraft type jobbie which you can live without), a level editor and one month's free subscription. Considering Tanarus is fun to play, isn't overrun with wallies and is resistant to lag, it's one of the better (and very few at this stage) online only games. If you like team orientated events, Tanarus is worth looking into.

Pete Sharpe



85%

Category	Online shooter
Players	1-10,000 (Ye Gods!) 1-20 on any one battlefield
Publisher	Sony Interactive
Price	STBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Real people, and objectives that require teamplay. Ability to fully customize four (five with boxed version) tank varieties with multiple weapon & special ability powerups.

Against You often have to get beyond newbie status for people to respond to your in-battle requests, which is initially frustrating as newbie status lasts for a long time.

Need P120, 16Mb RAM, 28.8k modem, Internet account, WIN 95

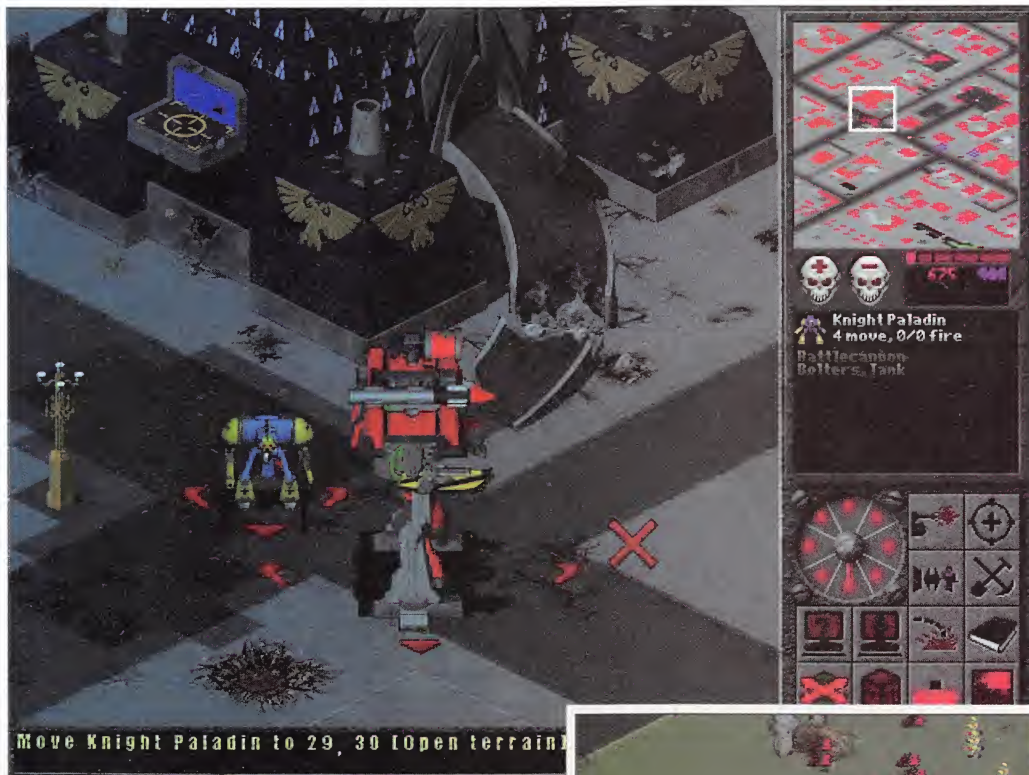
Want P166, 32Mb RAM, 3D acceleration looks nice, but software mode is very acceptable.



DIRECT 3D SUPPORT

WARHAMMER 40,000

Warhammer 40K fans will have turned straight to this page. The boardgame/phenomenon is highly regarded and much loved by many, which makes for a good hard look at the computer game.



In the 41st Millennium humanity's fate lies in the hands of an Emperor encased in dead flesh. In constant vigilance are the Black Robed Ones channelling him with psychic energy, for it is the power of the universal Ether that keeps him eternal. Dead in body, but alive in mind, the Emperor in his golden tomb must inspire and lead humanity in a universe plagued with nightmares. Rampaging Orks bloodthirsty for battle, harass the far flung and isolated frontier of Man's empire. The Tyranid race, an insidious and deadly alien hive mind infiltrate planets one by one, infusing infected alien DNA causing whole societies to collectively scream in agony. The greatest enemy of all, Daemons from the darkest realms of the void crave for the final annihilation of all that is living... namely us. Across the millions of worlds spanning the Imperium, humanity relies on the military might of the Emperor for survival against the forces of chaos. Both the regular troops of the Imperial

Guard and the genetically enhanced purity of the Space Marines face titanic battles in both land and space to ensure the glory of the Emperor's will is achieved. For it is said that even with the vast multitudes of battles raging across space, the



A great adaptation of a true freaky board game. You don't have to be a freak to play and enjoy it... though it helps...

Emperor's dead carcass sheds a tear for every warrior fallen in battle that dies in his name.

Planetary land battles

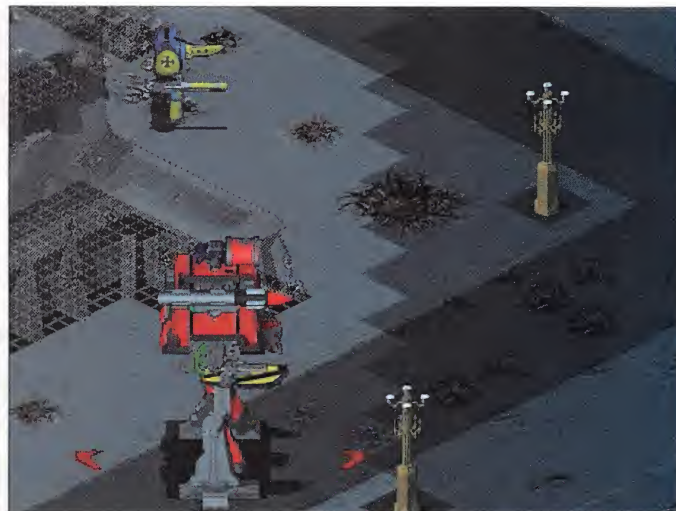
Welcome to the universe of Warhammer 40K, where military fascism, sci-fi and good old fashioned gothic mysticism combine for a very addictive tabletop wargaming experience. A world wide gaming phenomena, it has spawned a dedicated following of players and a pretty extreme sub-



culture. Final Liberation is based on the Epic Warhammer 40K rules, so it represents planetary land battles on a large scale with the player controlling squads of infantry, tanks and huge Titans (really big towering lumbering machines of death) rather than small scale skirmish battles as in the standard Warhammer 40K rules.

Lots of cool units

Final Liberation doesn't have to be relegated to a "Fans only" game, as the rules are quite easy to pickup. Most of the toughness in learning the tabletop variant is in the pages of number crunching statistics for armour rolls, distance modifiers and all the usual mathematics of warfare variables. Your trusty PC takes care of all the hidden dice rolling (but still keeps you informed of weapon and armour stats), so the player can concentrate on the art of tactical troop positioning. With the massive range of military hardware included and their corresponding roles on the battlefield, it's like deciding what to play with first on the best Christmas morning you ever had! Different flavours of infantry and tanks,



artillery (lots of it), air support, attack bikes, Ork buggies the list goes on. Add to the equation various types of ordinance from shelling, close assault blood and guts stuff to energy weapons and it will be a while before you finish playing with everything. After placing your troops within the assigned deployment zone, the aim is to secure one or more battlefield positional icons so as the morale of the enemy takes a nose-dive. Of course inflicting mass destruction, also keeps the enemy's morale on the downward spiral. The normalities of battle, such as using cover/terrain to your advantage are vital as is each squad's action points. You can use the points to either move, shoot or wisely save them to return fire during the enemy's turn. Going for a long range movement, but consequently leaving a unit high and dry without firing points... Well, the decision is yours.

Warhammer devotees would have noticed my constant referring to Humans and Orks, and are probably wondering about the inclusion of Tyranids, Eldar etc. No go I'm afraid. There are only Humans and Orks, with one story driven campaign for the



All the stats and dice-rolling are there, but the computer takes a lot of the rigmarole out of the process, leaving you to admire your trundling titans



Multiplayer matchup

Warhammer fans will not see any dust collecting on this CD, it captures the spirit of the tabletop version admirably. Constructing your own battles with the ability to stack the odds in one side's favour through allocation of army resource points and then playing with

human side concerning resting control of the planet Volistad from Orkish control. A Quick Battle option where you can play from either side allowing you full control over the size and consistency of yours and the opposing armies is also available. The included encyclopedia has empty slots for all the Warhammer 40K races, so things do at least look positive for an upcoming expansion pack with more beasts.

all those units that none of us can afford to buy is a thumbs up. It's a pity SSI don't have some sort of multiplayer matching service as this would be a hoot to play over the Net, but it's near impossible to find opponents. Also make sure you grab the 1.1 patch as this stops some bad crashing and problems with certain unit statistics. Our beloved Emperor would be pleased with this game.

Pete Sharpe

88%

Category Turn based warfare
Players 1-4 LAN, TCP/IP & Modem
Publisher SSI
Price \$TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For A professional Epic Warhammer40K conversion, with no bodgy short-cuts, in game mechanics, or unit statistics.

Against The Orks looks like Smurfs from Happy Land. Line of sight around buildings seems wacky, but you get accustomed to it. Artillery at times hits too often and too hard.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, WIN95

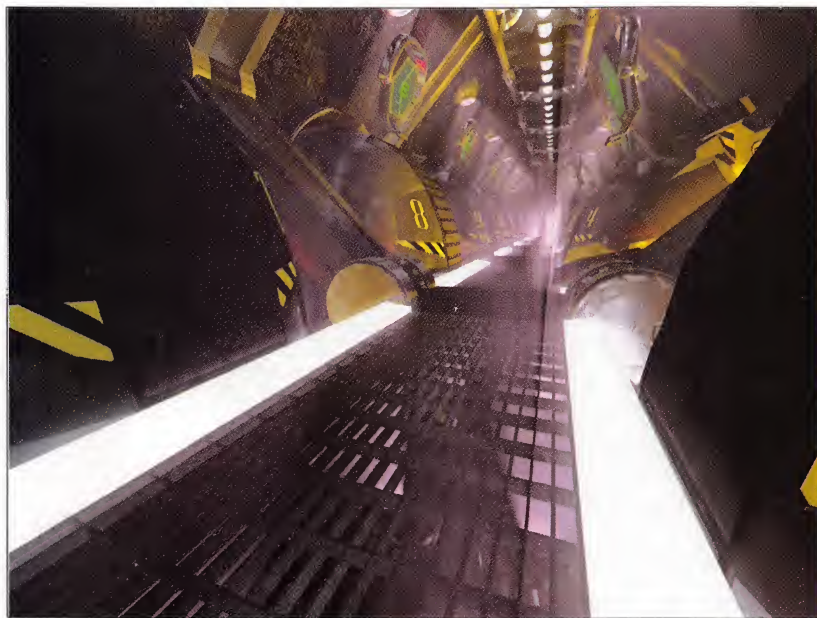
Want P100



JOURNEYMAN PROJECT 3

Legacy of Time

The first game in this series featured the rarely seen before FMV, plus a healthy dose of pretty graphics, making it a cutting edge "multimedia" title for its time, though the gameplay was lacking. Now with Part 3 has anything really changed?



ed when one of the agents, Agent Three, decided she might like to make a bit of cash on the side by selling the secrets of time travel to the Cyrollans. When things went wrong, largely thanks to the granite jawed Gage, she tried to get out of the repercussions by implicating Gage as the bad guy. Needless to say, Gage didn't take well to this, but after a bit of futzing about everything worked out quite nicely for the good

decides to break orders and jump into a new prototype jumpsuit in an effort to stop Agent Three's dastardly plot to stuff up the time/space continuum. As it turns out, Agent Three wasn't hatching a dastardly plot, but I won't give away too much about the actual plotline for the game. Anyway, that's how JP3 begins, and from there it just goes from strength to strength - at least in terms of storyline.

Nice pseudo-3D

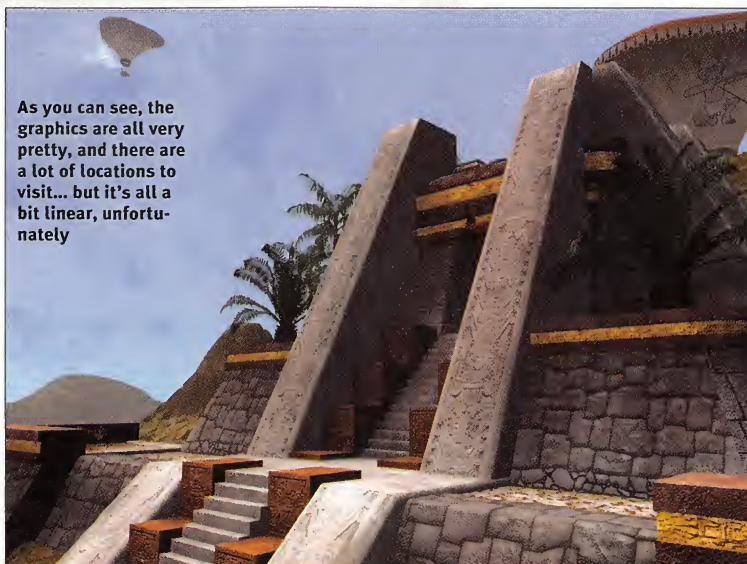
The interface used is all from the first person perspective, with a viewpoint that can be scrolled around through 360 degrees, and the scenery is pretty fantastic too. It's all almost photo-realistic, with real actors playing the

parts of the people you encounter through your travels. Everything is mouse controlled, and really, all pretty standard fare, elevated from the mundane by the lovely graphics and high grade technology used to create the environment in which you play. But, as always, cool graphics do not a game make, and Journeyman 3 is no exception. The viewpoint can, as I mentioned, be scrolled around to wherever you like, but all too often there's very little to do other than look at the scenery. In most places there will only be one way to go, and occasionally one

Gage is back! And he's not letting a silly name, nor a change of publishers (from Presto to Broderbund) get in the way of his general heroics either. Gage is once again thrust into the world of deception, intrigue, and time travel paradox in an effort to secure the past, present and future for the human race. This time around, Agent 3, his nemesis from JP2 is sort-of an ally, in that her travels have uncovered some very disturbing information about the Human allies, the Cyrollans. She unwittingly uncovers evidence that the Cyrollans actually destroyed or helped to destroy three of Earth's legendary/mythical cities of the past in search of some time control things. But I'm getting ahead of myself a little here. Let's start at the beginning.

Time to time travel

For those not familiar with the series; when time travel was discovered the Earth Government started up a top secret project to guard against time crimes because as oh so much Sci-fi



As you can see, the graphics are all very pretty, and there are a lot of locations to visit... but it's all a bit linear, unfortunately

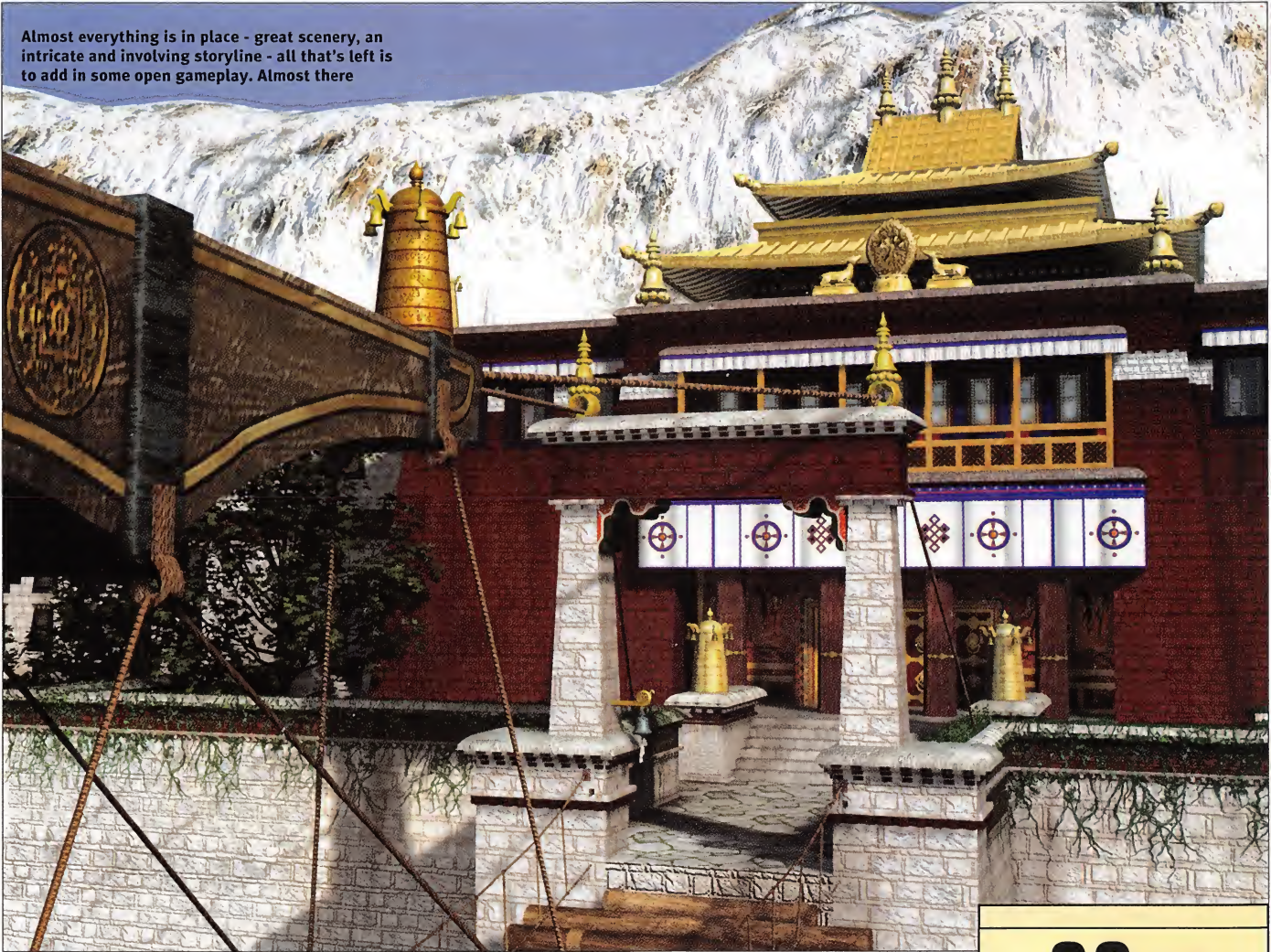
tells us, screwing around with the space/time continuum isn't all that much of a good idea, as it tends to change things around in the present quite a bit (like raining doughnuts, for instance). So anyway, the Government sets up the Journeyman Project, staffed by those who are charged with defending time from nefarious individuals. The problems start-

guys and the world was safe once more. Well, almost. Agent Three was still on the loose, and while those in power were inclined to just pretend that she was dead, Gage didn't have the same option. Banned from anything to do with time travel due to the government shutting the project down, Gage, being the heroic non-conformist that he is,

object to be picked up or used. The conversations with those that you meet around the places you visit aren't bad though, because Gage's new prototype suit allows for him to morph into the appearance of anyone he meets, so you can end up with 7 or 8 different identities to take on at your whim, which means that you can have a conversation



Almost everything is in place - great scenery, an intricate and involving storyline - all that's left is to add in some open gameplay. Almost there



with a person appearing as different people, eliciting different responses each time.

Comes with training wheels

But yes, a depressing linearity lets Journeyman down more than a little bit. The storyline is great, rich in depth and interesting enough for a novel, though as with novels there's only one way to read them

(Post

Structuralism aside) - from front to back, and though there is a little room for open gameplay, JP3 feels much too like a story that you're merely participating in rather than helping to create. And this isn't helped by your annoying little sidekick, Arthur, an AI entity created by some mad scientist that sits inside your helmet and vainly tries to crack a decent joke (though some of its' William Shatner impersonations are quite amusing) along with giving you clues along the way. Unfortunately, most of the jokes aren't even approaching funny, and its clues are either useless or too steery. Steery? Well, as with most adventure games you need to collect items and use them in the correct places to solve puzzles/challenges to get

to the next location or item.

With JP3 there seems to be only one way to do things. When you start to steer off the preordained path, Arthur will ever helpfully let you know that you need 'item A', and that maybe 'location B' would be a good place to look. Sure, it's helpful, and in fairness there is an option to shut him up, but even so rather than 'help out' when necessary, Arthur seemed more to steer me in the correct line all the time (as well as annoy me with his mostly crap jokes).

Even with these criticisms, however, JP3 is still a good game, the visuals are fantastic, as are the cut scenes (which are plentiful), and the puzzles/challenges are mostly well constructed and a test rather than a test of patience. But I can't help but feel that if Red Orb, the developers, had tried a little harder to make gameplay a little more open I would have liked this a hell of a lot more. Still, well worth a look if you like graphical adventures with a great plot and graphics, and not much flexibility in terms of gameplay.

Gareth Jones

69%

Category Adventure
Players 1
Publisher Broderbund
Price \$TBA
Rating TBA
Available Now

For Beautiful visuals, great introductory sequence, and a wonderful storyline that unfolds as you progress. There's a nice ambient soundtrack as you move about too.

Against One storyline, and though it is a good one, it doesn't leave much scope for 'adventuring' at all. And your sidekick is more annoying than helpful.

Need Win 95, P90, 16MB RAM, 4 x CD, 70MB HD space

Want P133, 32MB RAM, 8 x CD



journeyman3.com/mainindex.html



WARWIND II: Human Onslaught

Games used to be safe from the movie 'no such thing as a decent sequel' syndrome. Alas, no more...

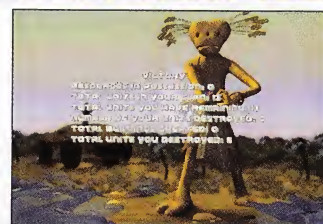
I've played and enjoyed quite a few real-time strategy games. I've also played and not enjoyed quite a few turn-based strategy games due to the simple fact that I enjoy fast-paced thinking rather than plotting and waiting. I hate to say it, but I would have enjoyed WarWind II much more had it been turn-based. Why? Lack of unit production queuing. Lack of unit order queuing. No visibility of incoming and outgoing resources at a glance. No decent waypoints (the game does have waypoints, but they look more like an afterthought as they are linear and you can only define four movement waypoints per unit. In short, too much is going on for a human player to manage effectively while at the same time trying to wage war.

A violence-inducing game

Then there's the dreaded interface, which can only be described as clumsy and non-intuitive (read: plain dumb), making it almost impossible to do anything productive and retain your sanity. When you select a unit, a separate build/action menu bar pops up on the unit, but with some units like buildings and vehicles, the interface bar on the right side of the screen contains it's orders. Confused yet? Try selecting and de-selecting units then. See George click unit to select. See George move unit to x. See George try to click other unit. See George scream aforementioned string of profanities as first unit moves to second unit, or second unit is selected along with first unit. See George

want to punch innocent monitor very hard. Get the picture?

Despite a plethora of bad points, there are some good aspects to this game. If you can master the keyboard shortcuts (and there's enough here to make Mavis Beacon rethink her approach to typing) you'll excel. I also liked the background history of why the four native races of Yavaun have banded together, as well as the new human influence. Whilst this doesn't contribute to the gameplay as such, it gives you some sense of purpose if you crave a little more storyline than 'we hate these bas-



54%

Category Real-time strategy
Players 1-4
Publisher SSI
Price \$TBA
Rating M 15+
Available Now

For Fans of the original will enjoy the 'human influence'. Runs on a lower-spec machine.

Against Clumsy and infuriating interface make enjoyable gameplay almost impossible. Too much to manage at one time. Just not up to scratch with today's RTS genre.

Need P90, 16MB RAM, 2MB Video, 4X CD-ROM

Want Total Annihilation, Warcraft II even

tards, go kill 'em'. Unit grouping and map markers are also well done, allowing you to jump to these easily. I also like the mix of conventional warfare with high-technology, magic, aliens and psionics - tres Spelljammer.

Ok for slow PCs

As far as graphics and sound goes, the sequel boasts no technological advancements over the first game - it's still sprite-based units with non-3D terrain, so the game will run fine on a P100 with 16mb of RAM and an OK graphics card. It does boast larger maps, new mobile units like drones and choppers, and multiple leaders with different attributes. The game also supports multiplayer over IPX or the net, but I wouldn't want to lose my

friends by subjecting them to this game. Maybe I'm being too harsh. Maybe after days and days of gameplay I may have picked up on some subtle essence the writers built in to make it the most enjoyable RTS experience yet. Maybe it's because I'm spoiled after so much Warcraft/C&C/TA/Dark Reign, but WarWind2 had me wanting to hear 'yes, my lord', and 'as you wish' all over again. Getting beyond the interface is a trial in itself, and simply did not let me play the game to the extent I would have liked. Thanks but no thanks SSI - I'd rather pump my time into something that I enjoyed from the start.

George Argy

PLUS+

WARWIND II: HUMAN ONSLAUGHT
The world of WarWind II

WarWind II takes the diversity and richness of the original WarWind and builds on it with a new story. The four races of the original game have merged to form the SSI and C&C nations. In addition to these, you have the new races of the Yavaun, the Droids, and the Mages. Each of the nations possess a unique set of units and abilities.

Use WarWind II to build your army, train your units, and conquer the world. The game features a variety of units, including infantry, cavalry, and magic. The game also features a variety of buildings, including houses, farms, and temples. The game is a true RTS experience, with a focus on strategy and tactics.

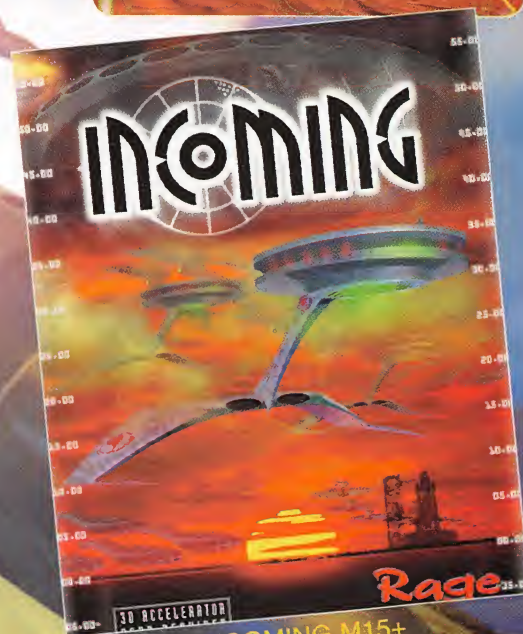
<http://www.ssionline.com/warwind2/main.html>

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FLIGHT UNLIMITED II

Flight Unlimited II does not pit you against the latest Russian military hardware. Instead, the San Francisco Bay and city area is yours to explore and (unfortunately) not bomb.

For those like myself who are used to flying jet sims, be prepared to learn how to really fly. There's no instantaneous response and high speeds here - slow and precise is the way these birds fly. Make a mistake and chances are you're toast if you're not high enough, as most planes are difficult to fly and extremely unforgiving in stalls. The only slight exception is the trainer, which I found stable and easier to fly than the others.

Calm and sensible

Patience is the key in Flight Unlimited II, and a lot of reading. It takes ages to get anywhere or do anything due to the speed, or lack thereof, of the plane as well as the fact you have to obey the Air Traffic Controllers while taxiing and flying in holding patterns. You can kiss any thoughts of funky dives, loops and rolls goodbye also, as these planes are definitely not built for that kind of tomfoolery. Calm, sensible flight and enjoying the view is the order of the day here, and if you want to squeeze everything you can out of this game, be prepared to read quite a hefty tome on Air Traffic Control, navigation and other fun stuff.

Once you master it though, you'll get a real kick out of playing the game 'for real'. There's a great deal of interaction between the pilot and the tower, and some funny comments coming from the ground controllers if you do not respond properly, or do something out of place like, 'you are not an all-terrain vehicle'. Do something that endangers other aircraft and you can almost feel the wrath of the FAA



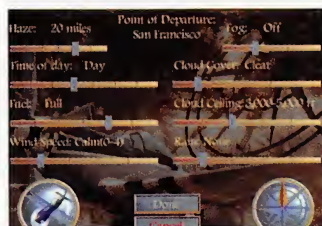
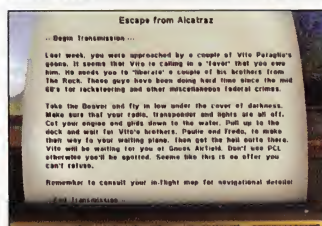
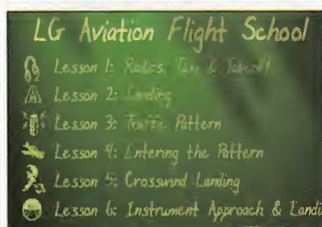
(top) Vectoring in to buzz the Golden Gate bridge (right) impersonating the Goodyear blimp (below) about to re-create what really happened to the Exxon Valdez



coming down on you. Fly over military space without communicating properly and, well, those AMRAAMs look mighty purty up close.

Look at that view!

The reward for your patience is most definitely worth it - FU2 sports simply the best looking terrain I have ever seen on any flight simulator to date. Tall call? Check out those screenshots baby, they are from the GAME!



At 10,000 feet plus you cannot tell the difference between aircraft photos and the game, it looks that good. Fly at less than 5000 feet though, and you suddenly realise why it looks so good. It is a photo rendered on the terrain, which is all flat and blurry. In fact at low altitudes the 3D stuff like buildings, bridges and the odd baseball stadium look starkly out of place in it all. Hell, you can even land in the



suburban areas, as there's no real buildings and no difference between tarmac and grass. But who really cares when you can fly around an obscene amount of square mileage, all beautifully rendered?

Are you for real?

The other great aspect is the level of detail Looking Glass have tried to inject to give the arm-chair pilot the feeling of really being there. Depending on how much you thrash the plane, you'll cop engine cut-outs, flight spins and wash from the exhaust of other planes, and the engine noise flawlessly reflects what your throttle and plane are doing. Fly into something and watch your plane bust apart in a number of interesting ways, instead of exploding into a fireball. On a more pleasant note, the weather effects are very well done, including clouds, fog, haze and rain that not only look and sound stunning, but also greatly affect the way the plane flies. If you get bored of one plane, choose from 5 others including a P51-D and a De Havilland sea-plane. There's also a whopping 46 airports to fly to, different

pilot voices depending upon your preference and a bucket-load of graphics, sound and realism options to mess with. Man, talk about being spoiled for choice!

Upgrade time...

The thing that really surprised me was the performance, or lack thereof. On a P200MMX with 64MB RAM and a 3Dfx it wasn't as silky smooth as I'm used to, and I'm finding this a lot on recent sims. My guess is that they're trying to calculate flight dynamics and 3D terrain modelling as accurately as possible, and only leaving stuff like funky effects and rendering to the 3D hardware, meaning more load on the CPU than in other games. The more accurate they try to be, the



Simply lucious photo-realistic scenery, and plenty of it too

greater the CPU load. This is probably why, even after I turned off lens flare, clouds and adjusted the terrain detail, the frame rate improvement wasn't noticeable. Oh well, I had nothing better to do with that spare \$2000 than buy a Pentium II to play flight simulators...

FU2 is a worthy challenger to the hallowed Microsoft Flight Simulator 98 and Sierra Pro Pilot. In case you're wondering about the score, I gave it a number that reflects what the average gamer with an interest in flight sims would think of this game. If you've played every flight sim since A.C.E on C64 and still can't get enough, add 10 points.

George Argy

89%

Category Flight sim
Players 1
Publisher Looking Glass
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Absolutely breathtaking, stunning, photo-realistic (insert your preferred adjective) at +10,000 feet. Detail, detail, detail - you can never have too much.

Against You've really gotta love flying private aircraft. Lack of multiplayer support. Need a grumpy PC.

Need P100, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD

Want PII, 64MB RAM, 4xCD, 3D hardware



SUPPORTS 3DFX

Available in March '98 on PC CD-ROM Win '95

Battlezone Puts You in Command of a War.

Battlezone takes real-time strategy to the front lines with truly revolutionary action-strategy.

You are the high-level Commander making decisions from your own war-ravaged tank. Lead your U.S. troops on a mission to gain control of a superior alien technology in the true "space race" against the Soviets...or cross enemy lines to the Soviet side. Only one super-power will survive the Battlezone...

And it's all under your command.



Full-Scale 3-D Action

Pilot one of 20 anti-gravity war machines, and wield 25 devastating weapons – including mortars, mines, and the Thumper Device which triggers on-the-fly earthquakes on the morphable terrain.



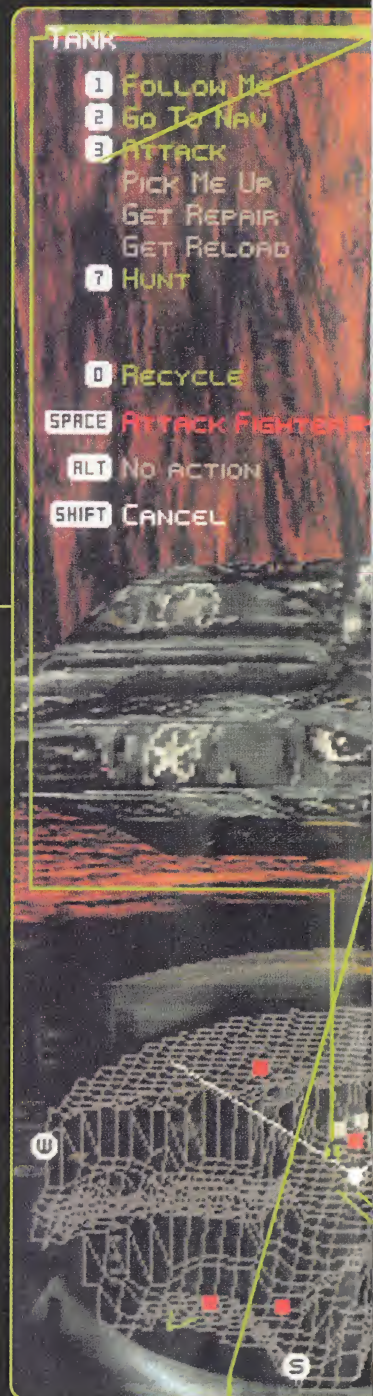
Complete Strategic Control

Coordinate full-scale attacks with over 30 unique units, such as tanks, infantry and mobile assault turrets. Call in artillery, deploy wingmen and manage resources – all from within your tank.



Dynamic First-Person Immersion

Lose your vehicle in battle, bail out, parachute to safety: then use your sniper rifle to take over another unit. Switch vehicles right on the battlefield of one of seven distinct moons or planets.



Grizzly Tank: Configure a Grizzly, the key American tank, right on the battlefield.

BATTLE ZONE

Take Strategy to the Front Lines.

**Actual
Non-Hardware
Accelerated
Screenshot.**

■ **Multiplayer:**
Enter multiplayer battles in full Strategy mode over LAN, modem or Internet, or up to eight-player battles in Deathmatch mode.

■ **Graphics:**
Features full D3D support and a fast software-rendering engine which incorporates actual footage from NASA space expeditions.

■ **Campaigns:**
You decide which army to command: play either the Stars-and-Stripes or Red Brigade campaigns.

■ **Pilots:**
Pilots are a resource. Run over and shoot enemy pilots who've lost their vehicles in battle, and protect your own.

■ **3-D Radar:**
A topographical 3-D radar displays your base location, unit placement, field of vision and enemy position.

■ **Scrap Meter:**
The Scrap Meter measures the Scrap available for the Factories to build new units.

■ **Scavenger:**
Send your Scavenger to collect valuable Scrap. Gather from scrapfields or destroyed units on the battlefield

■ **Weaponry:**
Spend resources to reconfigure your vehicle's weaponry on-the-fly in the midst of battle..



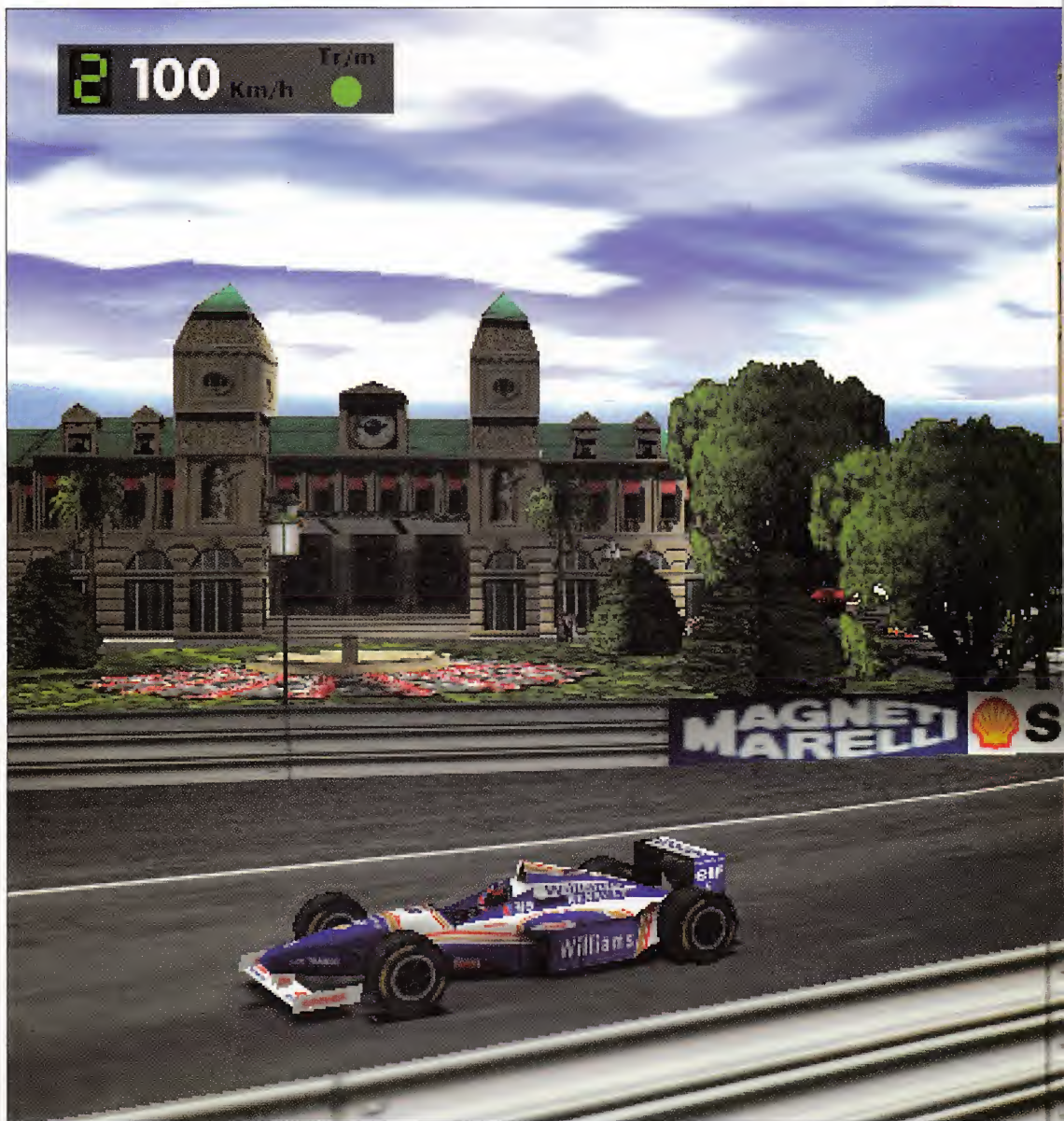
F1 RACING SIMULATION

Is this the one? Have Ubi Soft finally delivered the salvation that forever ends the curse of having GP2 and only GP2 for a proper F1 drive? Alas no, but she sure darn looks pretty.

Back about a hundred years ago, Ubi Soft released a Formula One racing game for the Amiga. Displaying an admirable sense of humour they decided to title it "Vroom!". Perhaps as an indication of just how much computer games, and the industry as a whole, have matured into something that can be taken seriously, their new Formula One racing game has been given the rather prosaic, but undeniably accurate, name of "F1 Racing Simulation". Or is it a sign that games have become too serious, publishers and developers too business-like in their approach. Have games, specifically PC games, lost that mischievous sense of humour? I wonder what was the last genuinely silly game that you played? A question for another day, perhaps.

Genuine helmet-wobble

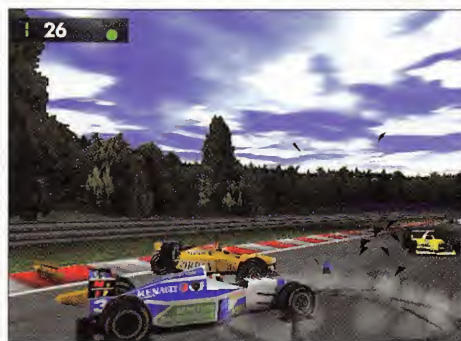
F1 Racing Simulation has been touted as the game that will force Grand Prix 2 to relinquish its thoroughly deserved crown as the best racing sim ever. Why might this be? Well, for a start I have no hesitation in declaring that F1RS is the best looking F1 game yet. To achieve such visual perfection, though, they've had to cheat a little bit. Backdrops are ill-defined and lacking in detail, but this hardly matters. Trees and some other parts of the scenery are little more 2D cut-outs, but again this matters not at all when you're racing past at 200km/h. More important details are likely to catch your eye anyway. There are the cars, for one. Based on the 1996 season, they are modelled exquisitely and, to my eye at least, have got the colours and logos exact. Though I would expect nothing less from an official FIA sponsored game. You can actually see the drivers' helmets in each car moving around as they hit the ripple strips and take corners. Other effects such as smoke from your screeching tyres and translucent sprays of dirt or



grass when you spin off look exceptionally cool.

Upgrade time, again...

Of course, all this requires some serious hardware - I'm talking a Grandmaster level Ninja PC here. The manual says a P120 with 3D card is the minimum spec needed to get the game running, but they have got to be joking. With this system, after you've switched the detail levels to minimum (no sky, foreshortened horizon, reduced number of competitors and minimal car



F1 purists frown upon this sort of careless, dangerous, but fun driving, but it sells tickets - and games

detail), you will just get a decent, smooth framerate whilst touring the track by yourself. Add two or three others cars on screen and the game will start dropping frames by the dozen. Attempt to start a race (i.e. with loads of cars on screen at once) and you'll be able to count the frames ticking over yourself. Because of this I'd recommend that you need at



(right) Monaco is a pig of a circuit, but it looks great - especially in F1RS

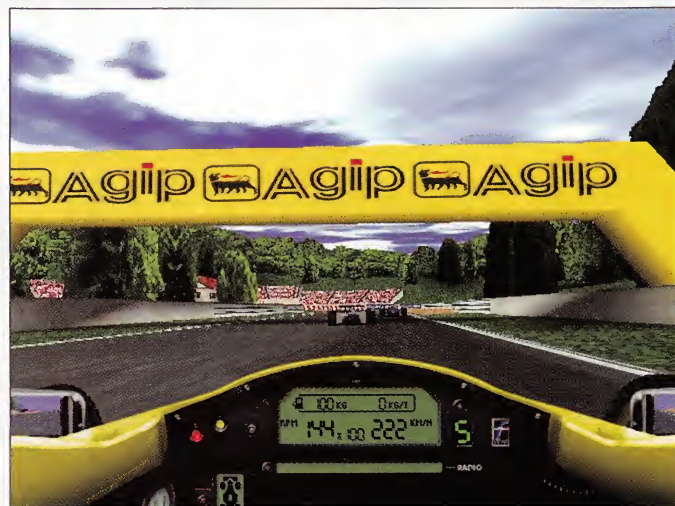


least a P200 to play as the designers presumably intended the game to be played. And let's face it, who wants to play an F1 game in which you can only really race against five or six other cars?

Right, so assuming you have the desired machine, what sort of game will you be playing? A reasonable one, that's all. F1RS does have a nice array of options, typical for any self-respecting serious sim. All the drivers and cars and circuits from the 1996 season are included, which makes it two years more up to date than GP2, except, curiously, for Jacques Villeneuve. I guess they couldn't get the rights to use his name for some reason, because throughout the game and the manual the man in the no.6 Williams is referred to only as "Driver X"! There's a decent size garage, too, for you to make all kinds of adjustments to the car, as well as the usual combination of driving aids for assistance. For the novice, selecting "Easy" mode, as opposed to "Realistic", is probably the way to go. With this you can ignore cumbersome things like, say, elementary physics, and simply enjoy the cut-and-thrust racing that many of us would dearly love F1 to be. And the game is entertaining when played this way, but it's not an F1 sim.

Artificial Stupidity

Unfortunately, the chances of F1RS making it as a true sim are hampered by several factors. First, and definitely most crippling, is that the cockpit view is



virtually useless. When you're sitting in the driver's seat you just cannot see far enough down the road. Any changes you've made to the horizon setting (to increase the graphical performance) only exacerbate this fault further. The unhappy alternative is one of the external views, which makes it feel and play far more like an arcade game than a genuine sim. The AI is also somewhat dopey. Backmarkers are cretins, plain and simple. They slow down far too much for even the mildest of corners and will cause you no end of trouble, even some horrendous accidents. Meanwhile, up at the front, your opponents tend to bash and barge a bit too much. They hold their line at all times, and if you're in the way - tough. Admittedly, this may have some grounds in reality. Hmm. More worryingly is the way your car always seems to spin in the same fashion. No matter how you lose it or what corrections you attempt to make, the car will always go into this neat 180 degree spin. Basically, you're not given much chance to reverse even the slightest error.

I expect that F1RS would seem mostly wonderful if you've never played GP2. Some may still pre-

fer it because of the beautiful graphics and fun "Easy" mode, but any F1 or racing game freak isn't really going to get much long term value here.

David Wildgoose



External camera views show the game at its best

PLUS+

Replays, driver setups, etc can be up- or downloaded at www.ubisoft.fr/f1racing/f1racing.html

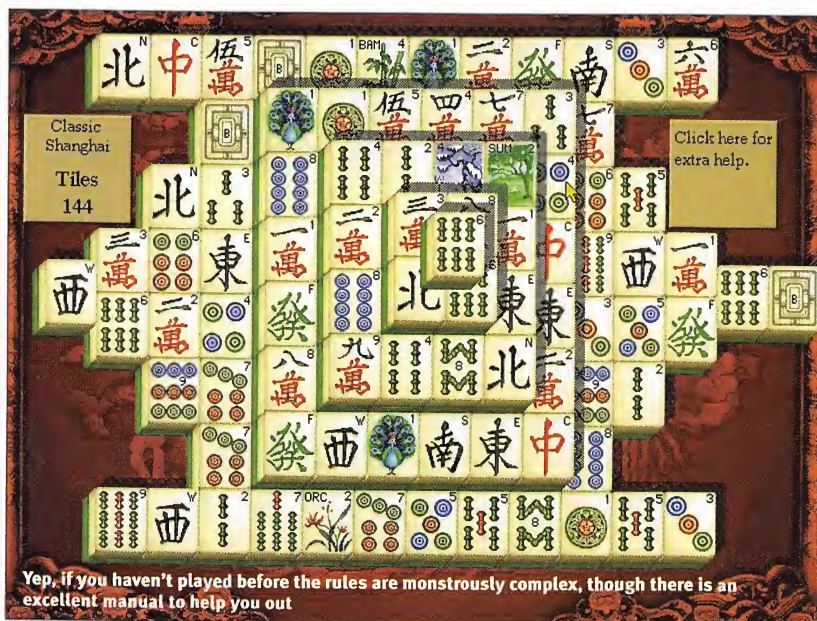
79%

Category	Racing
Players	1-8 (split screen, serial link, network)
Publisher	Ubisoft
Price	STBA
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	Highly polished and visually exceptional racing game.
Against	Terrible cockpit view. Some poor AI. Doesn't feel like a sim.
Need	P120, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD, 3D card
Want	P200, 3DFX

3D DIRECT3D & NATIVE 3DFX

SHANGHAI DYNASTY

The ancient game of Solitaire with tiles arrives in a polished new user friendly production. Never played it? Check it out.



Jongg, which uses all the same tiles but it's a competitive game for four players, and a little bit more complicated.

I won't go into the details here, but needless to say it's very well explained in the excellent manual that comes with the game, and you can select multiple levels of computer A.I. while you are learning. This is the game you can play over the net, or modem with. And it's not as confusing as it all sounds, once

related to the type of tiles you moved, and the trickiness level you achieved. These are really cool. When you score a move with bamboo tiles number four, a little Panda pokes his head out between some Bamboo stalks which dynamically grow out of the board, for instance. And when you use the dragons, a traditional Chinese dragon head appears and breathes tendrils of curly fire. And so on, for every piece, and of course you get a subtle little sound effect to go with it.

Also included on the Disk are Pandemonium and Dynasty, two variations on the theme and also versions of Shanghai for two players and for Tournaments.

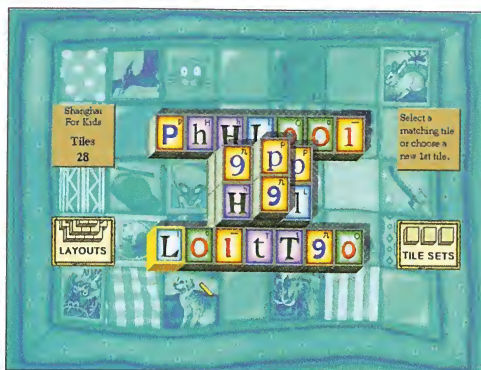
Hendry Saunders

Shanghai the game lies somewhere between Memory, Tetris and Gin Rummy. You have to remove tiles from a stack, only using the tiles that are free to move left or right, and are not underneath another tile. The tiles you have are in 3 "suits": Kraks (Characters), Bams (Bamboo) and Dots. Each suit has tiles numbered one through nine. There are four identical copies of each tile in the Deck. There are lesser sets of tiles, being the dragons (green, red and white), Winds (North, East, etc.), Flowers, and Seasons. These lesser tiles are not strictly associated with any others, and again there are four copies of them in the deck, with the exception of the seasons, of which there are four, but only one unique Summer, Autumn, Spring and Winter tiles.

Random, flexible game

Ok, you still with us? Shanghai is basically a random pyramidal stack of those tiles, and your aim is to remove them all by finding two "free" tiles of the same type. As you remove tiles, more are freed, and you can play deeper into the stack. Occasionally, you become stuck as the tiles you want are completely buried, regardless of how well you played. This is just a little indicator of the random, flexible nature of this game. This is evident in the numerous "exceptions" to events which will totally take you by surprise! For instance there are several tricky little associations between normally separate pieces, and some should be obvious but their conceptual image doesn't quite match their composition. For example, the number one tile in the Bamboo suit has a picture of a Peacock on it. Ah, as you would expect.

So that's Shanghai, but also included in the pack is the masterful Gin Rummy-esque Mah-



you have a go and get into it. It is, however, very cerebral and definitely a thinking person's game.

And the whole time you are playing, there is an excellent tranquil pan-pipe soundtrack softly playing, with tinkly Asian instruments which is very pleasant and calming thinking music. This is really one of the most enjoyable elements of the game, composed by Jeehun Hwang, it's really something.

Nice, pointless graphics

Not to mention the graphics, which are equally immaculate. Ok, so it's a board game, but regardless the artwork really is extremely nice, and every time you execute a move, a little animation plays in the area you moved in. These animations are

PC PowerPlay GOLD 93	
Category	Puzzle/Board Game
Players	1-2(local or null), 4(internet & LAN)
Publisher	Activision
Price	\$TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Gorgeous graphics, superb sound, intense user friendliness. The slickest introduction to this awesome game you'll ever have.

Against Ummm, it's a board game? No drawbacks, as far as this goes. Simply outstanding above everything in the genre.

Need Win95, P90, 16 Mb RAM, 2x CD-ROM, 40 Mb disk space, SVGA graphics

Want P133, 8x CD-ROM, 100 Mb disk space

PLUS+



EAST FRONT

Not all games realise their full potential at release, often an upgrade or 4 is needed to bring out the magic. Here's a fine example...



(left) A German defensive position about to be overrun! The game allows you to place mine fields and show the effects of artillery on a position

I'm glad that Ben gave me all of Christmas to look at East Front, because had I reviewed the game as it was originally released, and therefore without all the bug fixes that Talonsoft have been efficiently releasing, my review would not have brought out much of the underlying ability of the game engine. My review takes into consideration that I have upgraded to Version 1.05 and obtained the Supplementary Manual [efmanual.zip](http://www.talonsoft.com/patches.html) from <http://www.talonsoft.com/patches.html>.

First up, be aware that there is no option for deciding whether or not to install East Front's DirectX files, but luckily, if your DirectX installation is newer, an error will occur. Since this is the last instal-



lation action, it has no effect on the installation procedure.

Random Reds

Once fired up, the game offers eight campaigns between Germany and Russia during the year 1941 to 1945, 50 pre-built scenarios, a random battle generator, and a battle/campaign editor. A fairly comprehensive selection where the ability to edit pre-built scenarios and randomly generated battles is one of the games greatest strengths. Gameplay commences with you selecting to command a unit anywhere from battalion to corps in size. Then the game places you on the map as the commander and initially places all your forces on the ground for

you to make the first move. Each map unit is platoon sized, so at Battalion level, manoeuvring each unit is interesting, but try to do it a Corps level and wow does it take some time!

You can select Extreme Fog of War as an option that really puts the cat amongst the pigeons, because you cannot identify the opposing units until within line of sight, but nonetheless can hear them manoeuvring. Spooky, but real, and Talonsoft have done good work in the sound department to add to the experience.

Opportunity fire

A typical point and click interface is used to move, attack, target air strikes and artillery etc. Each unit has 100 action points (APs) to use for either movement or firing, and it must retain some of these APs before your opponent's turn if it is to take advantage of the game's ability to allow them to take part in opportunity fire during the opponent's move. Order of Battle and logistics has an important part to play in this game. Units must be kept close enough to HQs for resupply and reinforcements, and units low on ammunition fire at half effectiveness, so it is



If turn based wargaming is your thing and you really get into the Eastern Front and want this game, you must check out Talonsoft's Patches Page at <http://www.talonsoft.com/patches.html>.

a good idea to keep firmly focussed on this element of gameplay.

Graphics is another area where the game excels. Normal 2D hex is available, but Talonsoft have included 3D views which can be zoomed in and out and allow you to watch the fire fight in graphic detail once you complete your turn.

Overall, the game is good value after all the upgrades have been applied. Its complexity is hidden until you acquire the Supplementary Manual.

Maj. Ian Lindgren

75%

Category Strategy
Players 1 to multi
Publisher Talonsoft
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For The 3D graphics are great. Unit sounds vary for each unit and provide good background noise between plays.

Against Out of the box the game is a shocker! Five upgrades have already been released, and the manual has a Supplement that unlocks the primary abilities of the game engine and is the only way to find out how to really play the game.

Need P100 with 8 MB RAM

Want P166 with 16 MB RAM



AIR WARRIOR III

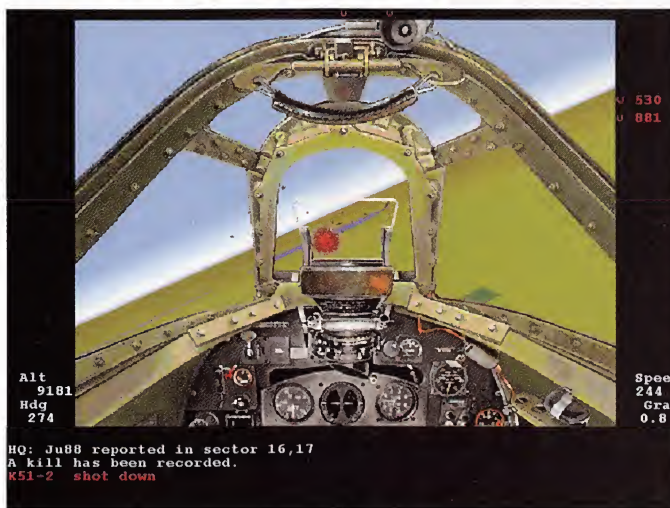
A feast of new online WWII air combat games are due to arrive "any day now". In the meantime, the sequel to the greatest of its kind so far quietly arrives and steals the thunder.

I've never been a great fan of Air Warrior (AW) 1 and 2 because I always felt that the interface was too simplistic and the graphics way below par. Well, I'm pleased to say that with the release of AW3 I am now a convert to the game. It's a notable mix of on and off-line gameplay, has many leading edge capabilities, caters for both powerful and not so powerful PCs, and most of all, it is absolutely addictive to play on-line.

You vs. 250 others

Of note is that the game is designed for up to 250 people on-line at any one time. Instead of making too many trade offs to cater for the 250 hardware variables, the game permits a multitude of graphical options. In the highest levels of graphical support, visible features like farms and villages and rugged-looking mountains can be seen, however, even at this level, detail is a little lacking due to the need to keep the terrain data sets compatible between those who have 3D support, and those who don't. Object rendering, such as aircraft, also fall in this category; they are very small due to bandwidth requirements, but luckily, AW3 includes an object tagging feature so you can identify who is who.

As far as off-line gaming goes, AW3 sports over 40 combat aircraft, in six WWII missions and campaigns, and a number of single WWI and Korean War missions. A total of 450 missions in all; air



to air, air to ground, single, double and multi-engined aircraft, off land bases or aircraft carriers, using guns, bombs, torpedoes, you name it's there! Pilot training is built in through a number of missions, and the enemy AI has been up-gunned to enable enemy to turn and flee, or some to engage aggressively if their aircraft outperforms yours! A mission builder now completes the suite, so the number of possible missions is unlimited.

Tanks too!

On-line, this game has it all, and is supported by an excellent manual. I played at the free beta site at www.bigtime.com, but as of 27 January AW3 will start to get many multiplayer sites. Once on-line, you drop into the Briefing

jump into tanks and other land vehicles to support the air attack on another team's airfield!

Another impressive feature of AW3 is real-time network (via Internet) speech! This allows you to talk with 16 other players using a soundblaster compatible card and microphone. It's poor quality voice, but heck, that's how radio was those days, and it is a great feature when you are member of a bomber crew calling out targets... beats typing any day!

I'll be playing this game for some time yet.

Maj. Ian Lindgren

PCPowerPlay
GOLD 92

Category Flight Sim
Players 1-250 Modem to modem, no LAN play
Publisher I-Magic
Price \$89
Rating G
Available Now
For All round entertainment, particularly for those who can form a Squadron, write their own missions and play them on-line with Network Speech. Stereo sound is great and different for each aircraft.
Against Object graphics are my only criticism, it does get hard to identify aircraft and their aspect angles at close range.
Need P 90 with 16 MB RAM
Want P166 with 16 MB RAM, 3D card, throttle and rudder.

3D

VOODOO, Voodoo RUSH AND D3D

PLUS+

Royal Australian Air Force

Welcome to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Home Page.

The RAAF Mission

Provide the capability to deliver air support to prevent further attacks.

Did well on AW3 did you? Think you are good enough to make the grade in the Royal Australian Air Force? Check out the RAAF Home Page at <http://www.adfa.gov.au/DOD/RAAF>.

HELLFIRE- Diablo add-on pack

The biggest flaw in this addon is its greatest virtue. With no multi-play we might all get some sleep now...



Cool new levels and all... but how much fun can playing with yourself be?

I prayed to the sweet Lord below that Hellfire was nowhere near as good as Diablo. Why? Let's just say 30 days in a room alone with a PC does wonders for your work, social life and general hygiene - and that was before I discovered battle.net. Thankfully, I think, Hellfire is only a single player add-on for the '97 GOTY.

The new story is that there's this Dark Mage who's been screwing around with necromancy yadda, yadda, yadda and has released a bunch of demons he can no longer control. The more powerful of these, apart from the great Lord of Terror Himself is Na-Krul, who you get to fight in the new crypt levels before you face Diablo. This new storyline is an extension of the existing Diablo story rather than a replacement, so the basic premise of the game remains the same: go down into the dun-



geon, kick some ass, get your ass kicked in return, find stuff, come back up, heal yourself, buy stuff, sell stuff and then go back down and do it all again.

Do the funky Monk

There are cool new levels though, like the Crypts and the Hive, new monsters including new bosses and a more powerful Diablo that won't die after just being flicked by your jock strap. All the new levels and monsters are done with the Diablo 'feel' in mind, and the artwork is very well done and fits perfectly into the Diablo world we know and love. There's new music in these levels too, and fans of the original score (gotta love that lute) will be pleased to know the new tunes fit right in. All your favourite villagers of Tristram are still here (yes, Cain the Elder still sounds like Sean Connery), with the addition of a farmer dude who gives you a quest and then does the Harold Holt,

something I couldn't figure out. There's a host of new items too, like runes that let you set traps, new weapons, armour, spells and of course a new character class, the Monk.

I played this new class until level 22 and found him a little awkward. He's good at hand to hand, but you ain't gonna put up your dukes to fight Diablo, or any of his high-level minions for that matter. He's a master of the staff though, with a fast attack and the ability to damage more than one foe due to that weapon's longer reach. He's limited to what items he can use until higher levels, but is proficient at melee combat and has mediocre magic ability. He's a good all-round character that's easy to play at the lower levels (I didn't die at all!), but cannot equal the fighter or mage for high level power.

Spin a new spell

There's a 5th page available in the spellbook now, with new spells that are mostly defensive ones, but quite useful. The funkier ones are Search, which highlights any items on the screen so you don't miss a single precious gold piece; Reflect, which bounces back an attacker's damage; and Wall of Lightning which is a rather cool version of Wall of Fire.

In all, Hellfire is quite a good mission pack that delivers what it promises without adding too

much to spoil the release of Diablo 2 - soon please good people at Blizzard. In fact the only real let-down is that it's a single player expansion pack only, and as everyone knows Diablo rocked hard and heavy as a multiplayer game. The new levels and character class would have been a heck of a lot of fun to play with mates. Oh well, I'll keep surfing the net until I find that multiplayer hack that is rumoured to exist...

George Argy

87%

Category RPG
Players 1
Publisher Sierra
Price \$TBA
Rating MA15+
Available Now

For A well constructed mission pack to add a few more weeks of replay value to an excellent game.

Against Lack of multiplayer bites hard.

Need P60, 16MB RAM, 2x CD, 150MB HD space, Original Diablo CD

Want P90, 32MB RAM, 4x CD



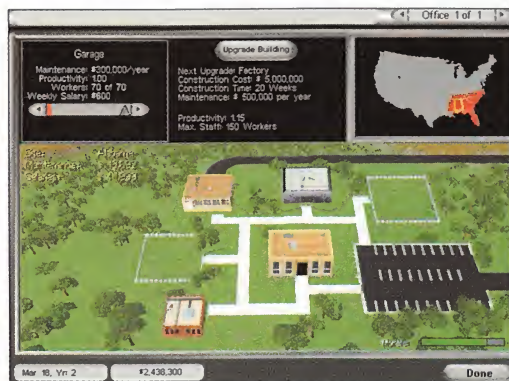


ENTREPRENEUR

Let's get down to business...



You've gotta love OS/2 devotees. They're almost as rabid as Linux nerds about their OS, and it's almost guaranteed that they will hate the big computer corporations with a vengeance. It's no surprise then, to find that Entrepreneur was created by a company that specialises in OS/2 products, and that it was released a couple of years ago (in pretty much the same form) for OS/2. Why is this relevant? Well, Entrepreneur is a business simulation where you start off in your garage making computers, and the aim is to build up into a world dominating empire. Sound familiar? Well, it just gets better. You're not the only company with megalomaniacal intentions, not at all. Instead there are up to seven other companies in competition with you, and they all have very familiar sounding names....like Mitrosoft, Itty Bitty Machines, LaST, MDI, Pear computers, and so on. Each has a different strategy to pursue, some for example, (let's pick one out of the air....Mitrosoft) rely heavily on marketing and



aggressive anti-competitive practices while others (Itty Bitty Machines, let's say) have an excellent product, huge on prestige and reliability, but they aren't the best in the world at marketing. Others (LaST, perhaps) concentrate on research and development but don't market their computers very well, and they're not so good with the public perception of their product either.

Empowered nerds

Though it might sound like a pretty silly way for a bunch of nerds to think they're empowering themselves; by making fun of the big corporations, Entrepreneur is actually a well thought out and well executed business simulation. If you're not careful, you just might find yourself learning a thing or two about how low down, how despicable, and how amoral mega corporations really are -

and you get to find out whether you might have what it takes to become a top class business executive. How the game works is that you start producing your computers, then try to sell them to countries. But it's not quite as simple as it sounds. Each country wants different things from a computer. Some prefer them high on functionality, while others favour prestige for example, and there are six areas of criteria for the computer in total - the others are reliability, aesthetics, ease of use, and performance. Each area can be researched and improved upon -

but in most cases research takes ages, and it's far far easier to just send a couple of marketing guys in to the country you want to increase sales in to try and convince the public that your machines are actually a lot

better than they think. Then there's advertising campaigns, which can also improve public perception in one of these areas in a given country, or send a wave of disinformation about a competitor. But still there's more underhanded ways to sell your gear - on most occasions by crippling your opposition through dobbing them in to the authorities, blackmailing the politicians to get a better deal, and a variety of other bastard-like ways.

It's a tough old world

But really, it's not all about knobbling your opposition, in truth Entrepreneur is mostly about planning your empire and maintaining it through thick and thin. And it works too, but this isn't an easy game even on the beginner level - the AI is modelled on other (winning) players, and as such provides a challenge even for experienced players. But



winning or losing, Entrepreneur is an entertaining game which is very well balanced, easy to get the hang of, but plenty hard to master. And those with an irrational hatred of Mitrosoft will probably enjoy it for a couple of other reasons too...

Gareth Jones

81%

Category	Rampant Capitalism Sim
Players	1-8 (TCP/IP, IPX)
Publisher	Stardock Systems
Price	\$TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Well thought out and balanced, encourages bastard-like behaviour, AI that behaves like real people, and the possibility of playing real people with multiplayer through Stardock's free game server.

Against Graphically it's nothing special, and the music is pretty annoying. Even on beginner level it's quite hard - don't expect to win for at least the first few times.

Need 486/75, 16MB RAM, 2 x CD, Win '95/OS/2/NT 4

Want P60, 32MB RAM, 4 x CD



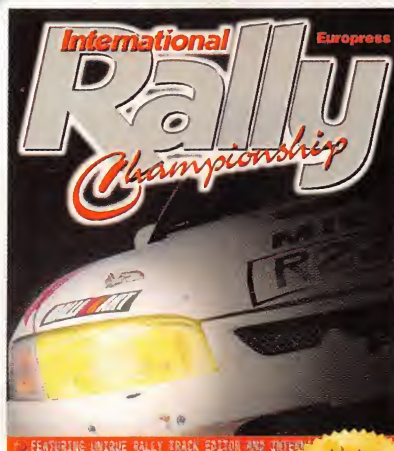
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MIN REQ: Pentium 90 with 16Mb RAM, Win95



The pure, gut wrenching thrills of world class motorsport roar onto your PC screen with Eurompress' latest driving simulation. International Rally Championship enables you to experience the true atmosphere of international rally racing from the dizzy mountain passes of Switzerland to the out-back of Australia.

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MIN REQ: Pentium 100 with 16Mb RAM, Win95



In one of the most challenging and fastest PC racing games to date, you take control of the adrenalin pumping cars everyone wants to drive as you race your way across six formidable international courses.

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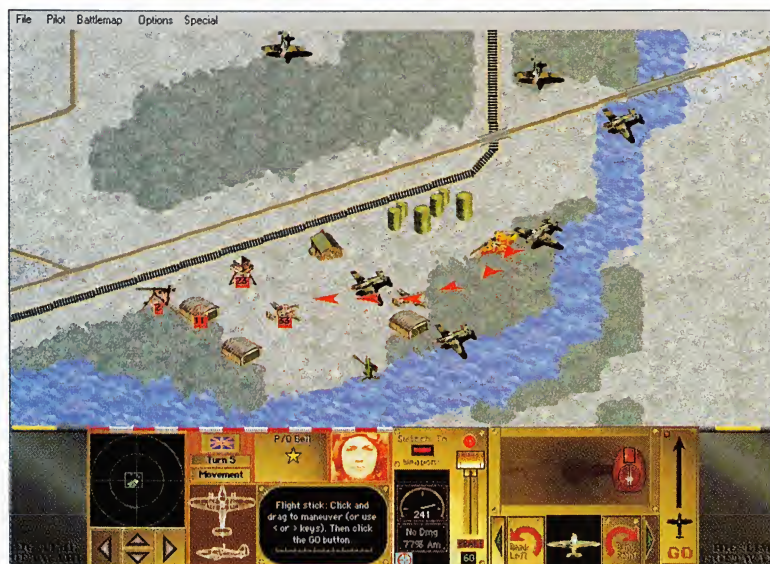


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Quality through innovation

ACHTUNG SPITFIRE

Wake up strategy sleepyheads, "more of the same" doesn't apply to this highly original title from masters Avalon Hill.



I must say that I am very much used to strapping myself into a single virtual aircraft and taking to the skies from within the cockpit. Not so in Achtung Spitfire! This is a thinking persons' game where you direct the actions of numerous aircraft from a 3rd person view that is quite unique and absorbing. Avalon Hill have previously made a similar game, Over the Reich, and fans of this game will be pleased to learn that they can create a character in Achtung Spitfire and extend the character's life into Over the Reich. The game is centred upon the Battle of Britain. You opt to take either the British or German side (a French option is offered, but is not worth mentioning).



An intriguing mix of realtime and turn based strategies, this game isn't bad

Halt the onslaught

Dogfights and Single missions are available, but the Tour of Duty Campaigns are the heart and soul of this game. You take command of a squadron, at one of five difficulty levels, and attempt to halt the German aerial onslaught or overcome the tiny Royal Airforce as appropriate. In your role as squadron

commander you are given 16 pilots, each has character such as Ace, Crack Shot and Green. Each can become weary, fatigued, KIA etc, so your task is not just to achieve each mission, but to consider who to put up, when and where and to progressively train the beginners!

A typical British mission begins in real time with all aircraft on the ground and you deciding whether or not to put up patrols or wait for contact reports. If you commit all your resources to the air too early, you can be caught on the ground refuelling, so strategy is critical.

As a German player you too commence in real time, and you must deceive the enemy into committing their airforce poorly, then reduce their capability by defeating their aircraft in the sky and bombing airfields and radar sites.

Once contact is made it's Tally Ho! complete with introductory WWII camera footage showing the aircraft involved. You zoom in to the action, and there begins the turn-based element of the game where you click on each plane and manoeuvre it. Each plane's range of

motion, turning radius, and firing trajectory is very well modelled, and you can click on targets within range to assess the percentage-hit chance. Your men advise you of gun jams, engine outs, loss of control etc, and all the while you must remember where your rookies and best men are! Action is not always in the air; some missions task you with ground targets and sometimes arm you with rockets and bombs. Watch out for the flak!

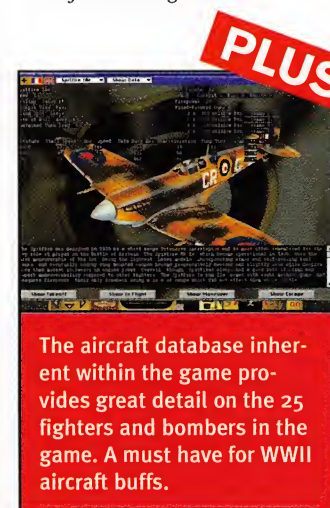
Who needs nice graphics...

At each turn, engines scream machine guns fire, and the computer AI is spot on, so think 2 to 3 steps ahead. Sadly, the graphics support to this element of the game is a let down, because while you do observe fire and lit-

tle trails of smoke, the explosion, "spiralling out of control" and ground graphics are a bit childish. As you progress past 1940 you also get to control latter aircraft like the Mosquito and Focke Wolf.

Overall, a good mixture of real time and turn based strategy, and a must have for those who enjoyed Over the Reich.

Maj. Ian Lindgren



The aircraft database inherent within the game provides great detail on the 25 fighters and bombers in the game. A must have for WWII aircraft buffs.

80%

Category	Strategy
Players	2 via Internet, email
Publisher	Avalon Hill
Price	\$89.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Entertaining strategy and tactical action. Great AI, atmosphere, sound effects and movie support.

Against Action graphics are poor, and the manual is not all that intuitive.

Need 486 DX 4/100 with 8 MB RAM

Want P100 with 16 MB RAM

SODA Off Road Racing

The people that brought us Nascar Racing supply another taste of ultra-pedantic physics modelling, this time in all new Rally flavours.



If you have ever played a rally game and thought: "Gee, this wheel camber really sucks! It needs to be rotated by six or seven degrees to the outside", then this game is definitely for you. SODA Offroad Racing adds the finite Simulation angle to the rough and tumble play of a rally game.

Stadium short-courses

It's called "Offroad Racing" instead of "Rally", because it's based on the Short Course Off-Road Drivers series, where the action occurs on very close-knit tracks within about a kilometre square: kind of like in a stadium, as opposed to the roving interstate journeys that rally games invariably take you on. This means you can pretty much see the whole track from any given point, which makes it easy to see what's coming up, but also you won't see extensive landscape graphics.

A good feature of this condensed track design is the



Kinda like GP2 on dirt, the level of anality possible during the car setup phase is very impressive

Track Editor program, which comes bundled. This allows you to design a track in full 3D with finite adjustments, again, great for those of us who want to have that nitpicky control over our games. It is a very powerful tool, and as such requires quite a bit of time to become accustomed to.

The environment graphics are befitting a hardcore Sim, as in they are functional to a fault. Naturally, if you are extremely concerned about your realistic thermal tyre deformations then you would be foolish to wish for any extraneous effects like solar flares and heat haze. The world is defined in polygonal geometry, with very few visual curves or smoothed edges: it looks like origami with bitmaps. The road surface, notably, is sectioned as though carved by a snowplow into a concatenation of flat faces. Which shouldn't bother you, again, because the game is com-



pletely focused on the presentation of scientific realism.

The 500bhp Lawnmower

Another element that gives you pure bare-bones feedback is the in-game sounds. You get a very accurate aural representation of the RPM's you are redlining, unfortunately they are not the most inspiring engine noises we've heard. In fact, they're pretty average i.e. a MixMaster being garotted. It's a shame, but they just don't compare to the sounds from recent titles in a similar vein.

SODA Offroad Racing, it has to be said, is very difficult to get into. The same way you would, really, get your ass kicked if you climbed into a dirt beast and took on the professionals, predictably you will get absolutely dusted during your first twenty excursions onto the track. But there is hope. Every conceivable element of your racing vehicle can be tweaked, bent and adjusted to suit your racing style or the conditions. For example the horsepower, tyre tread, shocks, weight distribution and the scope of your gears are all configurable to the nth degree.

It's really real

Considering the very steep learning curve, SODA would provide any pedantic rally freak with a chunky challenge, and most ordinary people with an emotional complex. That said, the "feel" of SODA is very touchy and dangerously responsive, which while realistic is frustrating unless you read the physics

manual on Driving Theory for Offroad Automobiles 1.01. The manual which comes in the box is luckily enough an abridged version of the above, so if you are bored by the simplicity of other rally games, this will undoubtedly excite you.

Hendry Sanders

75%

Category Rally driving sim
Players 2-6 network, 2 serial/Modem
Publisher Papyrus/Sierra
Price STBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Scientific Realism, intense mechanical and physical detail, full-on customisation and a funky track editor.

Against Nasty polygonal graphics really grate after the recent spree of juicy 3D titles, highly pedantic modelling will deter race-game tourists. Engine noises not very inspiring.

Need P90 (reduced graphics detail essential), Win95, 16MB RAM, 16-bit sound card, 2x CD-ROM, 60 MB Hard Drive space.

Want P200+ MMX, Rendition 3D accelerator card, 32MB RAM



3D SODA EXCLUSIVELY SUPPORTS THE RENDITION FAMILY OF 3D ACCELERATORS, GREAT NEWS TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE THEM, BUT A SLAP IN THE FACE TO THE (VOLUMINOUS) DIRECT3D COMPATIBLE AND 3DFX PEOPLE OUT THERE. WITHOUT HARDWARE ACCELERATION, YOU NEED SOMETHING LIKE A P166 TO GET ANY DECENT SORT OF FRAME RATE/DETAIL.



CIVIL WAR 2: GENERALS

As part of the ongoing campaign PC PowerPlay is waging for the resurgence of turn-based strategy, we present for you the following review:

Master Of Orion 2 may have won our vote for Game of '97, but it should be clear to anyone that turn-based strategy has lost the great wargaming wars. With the possible exception of MOO2 and HOMM2, the genre has been dominated recently by continuous (or "real-time" if you insist) strategy like Dark Reign, Red Alert, Myth and the rest. This much is obvious. Less obvious is the reason why. It certainly isn't because they offer a greater depth of strategy since, as Jere has pointed out, something like Red Alert requires very little strategy. In fact, the opposite tends to be true.

Little blokes running around

Yet where continuous titles do have an advantage is that they appeal to the non-strategy gamer. It's the animation, you see. Graphics do beat gameplay. Watching your little blokes run around simply makes more sense and creates a more immediate and compelling game experience. It's for this very reason that if you've been schooled in the C&C and Warcraft field of wargaming, then the appeal of games like Sierra's fine, upstanding Civil War series may prove elusive.

Except I don't buy the argument that turn-based games are inaccessible, either.

Civil War 2 is actually a very simple game to play. You select a scenario and in a few moments you're looking at some rolling green fields and hills, several towns here and there linked by roads, and a num-

ber of troop units each occupying their own hexagon. All units have a set amount of action points they can use each turn. Moving costs points, as do firing, charging, changing formation, digging in, etc. Different troop types can perform varying actions. Infantry are your bogstandard ground troops who fight at close quarters. Cavalry move faster and so are capable of swift attacks and withdrawals. Specialists can snipe accurately from distance, while artillery units bombard the enemy from nearby hills, both leave the enemy unable to retaliate. Frigates, gunboats, siege mortars and engineers come into play at a later stage. Basically, you move all your men, then the computer moves, then you move again, and so on. This is all you need concern yourself with in the easy mode.

Trees easy

In the more advanced game, factors such as line of sight, line of fire, and troop morale, organisation and loyalty need to be taken into account, as well as macro-management details like supply lines and purchasing weapons. But still, this is all very intuitive stuff. For example, you can't keep your troops constantly on the march, they do need to rest. Or attacking from height is a distinct advantage, while woodland gives useful cover. Doh! Who would have thought, I hear you say. Exactly. This is not a difficult to learn game.

Perhaps the only unusual aspect comes with the victory conditions, but even this is realistic and makes perfect sense when you consider it. Unlike most games, you don't win in CW2G by wiping out the enemy. Rather, the level of troop morale and the length of time you occupy certain strategically vital locations are used to determine the victor. Thus, there are five different outcomes - Minor or Major victories for either the Union or the Confederates, plus a draw or stalemate.

The only flaw I've found is a bug that crashes the main "Civil War" campaign if the Confederates gain victory.



Sure it might not look as pretty as your RTS game, but there's plenty of fun to be had - possibly more

Sierra, however, have rectified this with a patch.

David Wildgoose

81%

Category Turn-based strategy
Players 1-8 (hotseat, modem, Internet)

Publisher Sierra

Price \$TBA

Rating M

Available Now

For A deep, but easy to learn turn-based wargame. Phenomenally detailed in all aspects of the American Civil War. History buffs will peak.

Against Could still be a touch more engaging and exciting, though. Crap FMV clips (that you can thankfully turn off!).

Need 486/66, 16Mb RAM

Want Pentium, 4xCD

CROC

This one was originally released on the Playstation where it proved a minor success last year.

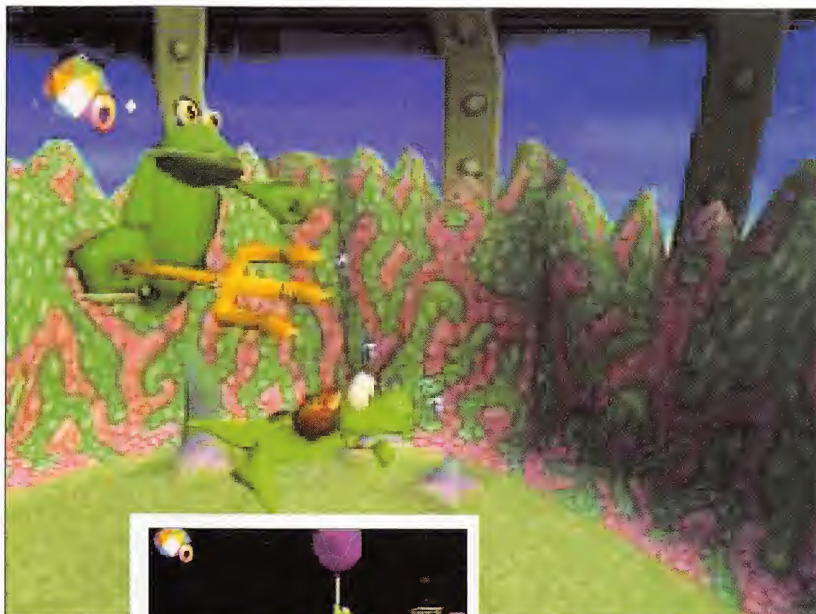
Croc was put together by a team called Argonaut Software, the same developers (in name, at least) who worked on ancient PC and Amiga classic Starglider 2 as well as Starfox for the Super Nintendo. From PC/Amiga to SNES to Playstation to PC; from high-tech action space-sim to cute space shoot 'em up to cutesy 3D platformer. Surely one of the more interesting career trajectories within the gaming industry.

Cutesy 3D platformer

But anyway. Croc is the above-mentioned cutesy 3D platformer. The levels look quite beautiful, all vivid colours and varied landscapes. They're inhabited by some gorgeous little critters, too. The tiny brown creatures with huge, sad eyes that Croc has to rescue are the cutest. But even the enemies aren't far behind. Rats, for instance, look far too nice and friendly to want to kill them. So do the cheeky imps, although they do shoot nasty fireballs at you which, I suppose, is reason enough to do away with them. Surprisingly, you don't actually kill things by jumping on their heads, as you would in most other platformers. Instead, Croc has a rather spiffy tail swipe that sends any of his cute, woodland creature enemies disappearing in a cloud of smoke. Ha!

But they don't really die, natch.

In one of several gameplay crimes Croc commits, enemies REGENERATE before you even leave the same area. Okay, sure, it's fair enough that they would reappear when you leave a certain area and then return to it later - even I don't wish to be traipsing back through empty locations - but while you're still there? That's just not on, as far as I'm concerned.



The last sentence says it all, really. "The kids will love it".

in each level are five coloured gems. If you find them all then you can unlock the gem-encrusted door situated somewhere on the level. Only the incredibly lucky player will find them all first time, so you've got plenty of reason to go back to those levels you've already completed.

One thing that particularly perplexed me were those crystals. They're supposed to be your life meter, but every time you get hit by an enemy you lose them all (whether you have fifty or five). Another hit and you're dead. Essentially, then, there's little to gain from risking Croc's life collecting any in hard-to-reach places. The third gameplay crime I detected is that, while you can move the camera around, it always reverts back to the over-the-shoulder view when Croc starts moving. This can make it tough at times to judge distance and thus can unnecessarily increase the difficulty of many jumps.

Not in the same league as Mario 64, but just about the best platformer on the PC. Kids will love it.

David Wildgoose

Jump on things! Woo!

Which brings me to Croc's level design. Each level is quite small and often split into several even smaller rooms. The rooms themselves are usually no bigger than what you can see on screen and feature either a puzzle or two, some crystals to collect or a tiny brown creature with huge, sad eyes to rescue. Mostly the route through the level is pretty obvious, some can even be completed without killing, collecting nor rescuing anything. If you want to rescue your friends then you'd better start trying to work out the puzzles. Despite being small, the levels can get somewhat convoluted with doors, holes, ladders and ledges running here and there. Some clever jumping and the use of balloons and switches is what is required. Also hidden

74%

Category	Platform
Players	1
Publisher	Fox-Interactive
Price	£TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now

For An extremely cute, good-looking and playable platformer. Kids will enjoy searching for all the hidden goodies.

Against Some minor flaws, regeneration being the worst. Occasionally dull level design.

Need Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Win95

Want P100, 3D card, 4 button joystick



TWISTED METAL 2

Whoa! Extreme gaming dudes! Who needs a Playstation (which looks like, and is best used as a toilet seat) when all the cool games look and play better on PC?

Twisted Metal was never released on the PC, Sony opting instead to jump ahead and convert the sequel. This is certainly a good thing, not in the least because TM2 is an exceptional game. But also due to the fact that, as is so often the case with Playstation (and, to a lesser extent, PC) games, the sequel is really only just what the first title should have been all along. TM1 was short-lived fun, pretty much a waste of time. On the other hand, TM2 is a genuine classic.

Pure deathmatch carnage

Any semblance of meaningful plot has been eschewed, leaving you to concentrate solely upon the action at hand. And what superb action it is.

Twisted Metal 2 is pure deathmatch carnage, the distilled combative essence of Quake and Carmageddon. You choose your car and driver from a motley collection of twelve post-apocalyptic renegades and losers - these are society's outsiders. There's Axel, imprisoned inside his giant two-wheeled vehicle and desperately seeking an escape; the superfast F1 car Twister, driven by "Crash"-inspired, Schumacher-wannabe Amanda Watts; while zombified army veteran Warthog takes to the streets in a trundling, impregnable tank. To name but a few. Once selected you are whisked into the first battle arena, a ruined and desolate speedway in Los Angeles, with the aim of simply being the last man standing.

You begin with a slender arsenal, but there is a plentiful supply of power-ups spread over each arena - such as homing missiles, remote bombs, turbo boosts, napalm, and lightning strikes. Better still, each driver has their own "special weapon". Whether it's Roadkill's unstoppably violent boomerang or Mr Grimm's life-draining Screaming Soul, they're all capable of inflicting some awesome damage.



ter that they take no damage from crashing into buildings at ridiculous speeds. You see, instead of ruining the game, these factors only serve to enhance and heighten the fun. Twisted Metal 2 has nothing to do with reality. Rather, it's about leaping from the roof of one impossibly high New York skyscraper to the next, grabbing an oppo-

nent with your front-end loader and smashing them to pieces, launching sheets of napalm from the Eiffel Tower, and volleying a round of homing missiles into the ice-cream van driven by your arch-enemy, Sweet Tooth.

The one-player game is perhaps somewhat limited. Progress is made through eight stages, the aim of each being to clear the arena of the other six or so cars. Where everything comes alive, however, is in multiplayer. Unlike the Playstation there's no split-screen, but in its place is the possibility of an up to eight player networked deathmatch. This is where Twisted Metal 2 scores most of its marks. It's not a bad game by yourself, but against friends it is almost unbeatable.

David Wildgoose



See! Not all console games suck, especially when you can play them on your PC

84%

Category Action
Players 1-8 (Modem/network, 1 CD for 3)
Publisher Sony Interactive
Price \$TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For Pure deathmatch action. Superb multi-player game.

Against Limited if you're only playing on your own.

Need P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95

Want P133, 4xCD, 3D card



DIRECT 3D

PLUS+



www.sonyinteractive.com

JET MOTO

Another Playstation port! We love the Playstation and don't feel threatened by it at all...



Nooo! The invasion of the console ports has begun. This is actually not bad though

Consoles, eh? Full of cute kiddie games that the ever-so-serious, uptight PC gamer sneers at with that special kind of self-righteousness peculiar to all ever-so-serious, uptight PC owners. At which point they return to playing their serious, "proper" games like Quake and Warcraft. Oh, it makes me laugh, this console vs PC debate. What's wrong with simplicity? What's wrong with cute? If you can't enjoy a Mario game, then you're a sad, humourless individual whom I genuinely feel sorry for.

It's time to tear down the barriers between systems! It's time to trample inconsiderately across genre divides! Are you with me people? It's time for the gaming dilettante to rise up and be counted! It's time for the people who can like both Twinsen and Total Annihilation! Who can enjoy Master Of Orion and Mario Kart! Both Jet Fighter and Jet Moto!

Ride it, get on it

Ah, yes, Jet Moto. A dazzlingly fast hoverbike racing game, if my memory of the Playstation



version serves me adequately. I also recall enjoying its free-for-all, two-fingers-to-realism approach to the action immensely. You begin by selecting a bike (and biker) from a list of twenty, each varying from the others in weight, handling, acceleration, lift, and colour. The remaining 19 bikes will be your competition throughout the season. Such a season consists of only three races initially - you need to finish these with the most points to

unlock further tracks.

The tracks themselves can be quite spectacular. Blackwater Falls features a clever shortcut through a riverside house followed by a stunning leap from the very top of a giant waterfall. The next corner then leads up a massive dam wall to an overhanging checkpoint sign that may easily take your head off if you're not careful. The final Nightmare circuit consists of some flimsy metal planks, full of holes and hanging hundreds of feet above the night lights of the city - definitely one not for the faint-hearted. In between there are all sorts of beach, river, swamp, snow and "suicide" tracks awaiting you. The latter are so called because they

are little more than a straight line with a couple of turning circles at each end - meaning that much of the race is spent dodging your opponents head on.

Weird science

Jet Moto is a pretty decent racer. It has its fair share of flaws, however. All too often does colliding with similar objects at similar speeds and at similar angles produce drastically different results. Sometimes you'll barely feel the bump, other times you'll be hurled from your bike. Tilting is also a nuisance. The designers would have been better advised to include an auto-levelling option (rather than the manual operation implemented) to relieve the frustration of trying to steer whilst virtually lying on one's side. The controls

feel just a touch clumsier than the Playstation version, too.

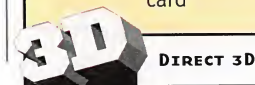
Purely and simply, Jet Moto is a good time racing game. To criticise it for its console origins and arcade aspirations, as if this meant it were somehow unsuited for the PC, is a pretty silly thing to do. Instead I've pointed out a few genuine faults (which were evident on the Playstation anyway) which I believe hold the game back from truly competing with the likes of, say, Wipeout or Moto Racer.

David Wildgoose



72%

Category	Racing
Players	1-14 (Internet, modem, network, serial)
Publisher	Sony
Price	£TBA
Rating	G
Available For	Now Nippy racer with imaginative tracks and a good racing feel. Cool music too.
Against	Some odd collision detection here and there. Tilting sucks.
Need	P90, 16Mb RAM, Win95
Want	P133, 4xCD, 3D card





Redneck Rampage: suckin' Grits on Route '66

CATEGORY Add-on pack

PLAYERS 1-8

PUBLISHER Interplay

PRICE STBA

RATING MA15+

AVAILABLE Now

NEED P90, 16MB RAM, 2 x CD. Original Redneck Rampage

WANT P133, 32MB RAM, working DOS boot (with CD and sound drivers)

overall

64%

More of the same, with a few token new bad guys, and some fairly cool maps (no new weapons though)

Oh great, Linnard and Bubba are back for some more rootin' tootin' shootin' good times. As would any self respectin redneck, after their dealin's with them aleeyun pig stealers, the animal fancying couple decide it's time for a bit of a vacation. Time to see the sights, they reckon, and faster than you can say cow dung, they've jumped into their pickup truck and headed off yonder to explore the cultural highlights of the countryside. Visiting places like 'Jake's Gator farm and Carnival of Terror', 'Bertha's Truck Haven and Shootin' Range', 'Big Billy's World Famous Gut Bustin' Brewery', and plenty of other delightful destinations, they find out that they didn't get all them aleeyun crap monsters in their previous adventure. In fact, they're back with vengeance in mind, and it's up to Linnard to do the job once again.

So yes, you're asked to open up another can of whupass on those cloned redneck aliens, with the same graphics, mostly the same bad guys, the same weapons,

and the same colourful asides from Leonard and Bubba. The levels take off from where the original ended, and even on the 'easy' difficulty levels are a challenging experience - they've obviously been designed for those souls that managed to finish the original version and are still hungry for more. Honestly, I don't fall into this category, so I didn't get all that much out of this add-on pack - just seemed like more of the same with slightly different graphics. It's still fairly good fun, at least for a little while. Maybe if there were a couple of new weapons, or perhaps a few different bad guys just for varieties sake, but alas no. The maps are large and detailed though, and if you liked the original one hell of a lot then it might just be what the doctor ordered - 12 more levels of red-necks whuppin' and cussin' and fartin' about.

Gareth Jones



"Don't you ponit that there shotgun at ma lurvely gurls! Daisy, Mary-Lou, git 'im! I'm gonna make you squeal boy"

Battleground 8: Prelude to Waterloo

CATEGORY Historical war sim

PLAYERS 1-2 (internet, modem, mail)

PUBLISHER Talonsoft

PRICE \$89.95

RATING G

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486 DX 2/66 with Win 3.1.

WANT P133, Win 95 and 16 MB RAM

overall

78%

It is a much more complex game than Waterloo, much more tactical, and harder to play. But offers a continued fight from one game to another.

Once again Talonsoft have released a further game based on their well developed gaming engine that has been improved throughout all the Battleground series. The setting for this game is 16 June 1815, just prior to Napoleon's great defeat at Waterloo.

At this time Napoleon commanded a force that was faced by two armies, one British and one Prussian. Napoleon, brash as ever, hoped to defeat each enemy in turn so as to ensure that both armies could not join forces, by blocking Wellington at the crossroads of Quatre Bras, and the Prussians near the village of Ligny.

Players who enjoy Battleground 3 - Waterloo, will be pleased to know that they can save their results from Prelude to Waterloo as the starting point for a Waterloo campaign game so long as they download the upgrade patch from the Talonsoft Web Site. Prelude to Waterloo offers 23 scenarios, three historically accurate and the rest being "what if" situations, with some using the new



"extreme fog-of-war" feature where all information on opposing units is hidden until they come into view.

In this game mounted infantry can use horses for greater mobility, and cavalry fights from horseback with swords and sabres, so each turn has an additional phase, The Cavalry Charge. Cavalry gains powerful bonuses by charging into a melee, and this is so effective that an infantry unit of compara-

Money, money, money, always funny, in a rich man's...D'oh!...You are a dancing queen, young and sweet only seven...D'oh!...Do you hear the drums Fernando...D'oh!...

ble size cannot stand against them unless it uses a special defensive formation-the square.

Sound and video are used to great effect and Talonsoft's 3D views all combine to make an enjoyable playing experience.

Maj. Ian Lindgren



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X-Wing vs. TIE: Balance of Power

CATEGORY	Star Wars!!!
PLAYERS	1-8 LAN, 1-4 TCP/IP
PUBLISHER	LucasArts
PRICE	STBA
RATING	G8+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	Original X-Wing vs TIE
WANT	Direct 3D supported accelerator card.

overall

83%

Campaign can be played in solo or co-op multiplayer modes. Too few drooly drooly cutscenes and not the variety of ships that was on offer in Tie Fighter.

Forget your freaky Star Wars conventions with fanatics all bowing before a purple sock that was "heavily rumoured" to have been part of the original Bobba Fett costume. The closest many of us have got to living and breathing Star Wars is experiencing X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter over a network. Watch as normally docile pizza eating mates transform into serious pilots who repeat "Stay on target, stay on target" like a spiritual mantra. Problem was, once everybody arrived back to solo gaming land, without a story driven campaign, XvT lost the magic. Balance of Power is aimed at filling this void, and for once it appears an expansion pack has arrived that actually does its job by enhancing its big brother.

Lucasarts have included the ugly but heavy duty B-Wing Rebel fighter and some new stand alone battles, but the big inclusion is the campaign mode. Well, two campaigns actually, 15 missions for the Rebs and 15 for



the Empire. All the missions are linked together by the attempt of the Alliance to run like hell and set up a new base of operations in the outer rim of the galaxy. The Empire is in hot pursuit, and is eager to try out a new class of Super Star Destroyer and crush the Rebels for good.

The missions are mostly reminiscent of previously seen scenario themes. Investigate the armada of cargo containers before the enemy arrives, dog-fight between two battling capital ships and so on. Although there are surprises, like stopping a multiple Kamikaze attack on a Star Destroyer by pirates. As is the tradition some of these mis-



X-Wing vs. TIE lives on! Sadly, though, still no sign of the "Bulls-eye the Womprat" bonus game

sions are very demanding, but changing the setting to easy should get you through. Just don't expect a ghostly Ben Kenobi to appear and praise the strength of the Force in you. Balance of Power doesn't have the story depth of Tie Fighter, but is a no-brainer for those owning XvT and wanting a quality add-on that will give you an interesting challenge.

Pete Sharpe



DIRECT 3D

Howzat

CATEGORY	umm...cricket sim?
PLAYERS	1-2
PUBLISHER	Mindscape
PRICE	STBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P75, 8MB RAM, 2xCD
WANT	A lobotomy

overall

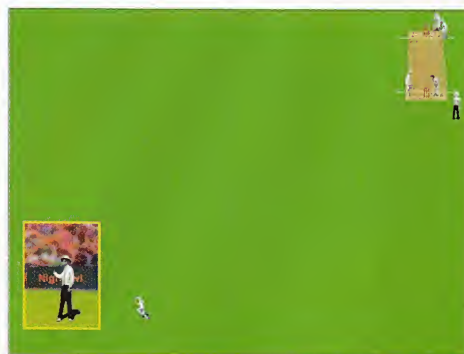
2%

This sucks. There are no redeeming features to it at all. Rummaging around in excrement filled sewer water for dirty syringes and used condoms would present more of an opportunity for fun.

Howzat is, in short, the most appalling game I have ever seen, and will ever likely see. There's only one thing that is going to convince me to give this more than 5%, and that's if it was programmed by a couple of young kids just getting their feet wet, but even so, why anyone in their right minds would decide to publish a game of this calibre is well beyond me - the graphics and animations are terrible, the commentary is woeful, the gameplay is practically non-existent, and I find it impossible to believe that anyone could enjoy this game even for a second.

What's so wrong with it? For starters, Howzat is made with Macromedia - great for Internet apps and so on, but not so great for games. Then, though all of the cricket playing nations of the world are featured none of the real players are, instead you get players like Michael Tailor, Ray Pointing, Michael Beathen, and so on. It really is quite sad. But then there's the gameplay - the ball physics are nothing like real life, bowlers bowl incredibly fast,

and as a batsman you have about 1/2 a second to decide what shot to play, to move into position, and then to strike at the right moment. Add to this that there are 12 different shots you can play, all controlled by the keyboard.



"Worst game ever"? Sure it might seem harsh, but in a few years this game will be played for its nostalgia value and appear on ironic compilations like "Classic B-grade games of the Nineties"

Want to make a sweep? Just press 'e'. Sounds easy enough, doesn't it - but add the other 11 keys (q,w, r, a, s, d, f, z, x, c) and a picture should begin to emerge of just how unplayable this pathetic excuse for a game is. Buy it for someone you really hate, strap them

into a chair in front of the PC and then listen with pleasure as they scream with pure agony. Other than that, there's no use for this game whatsoever.

Gareth Jones

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BREATHLESS

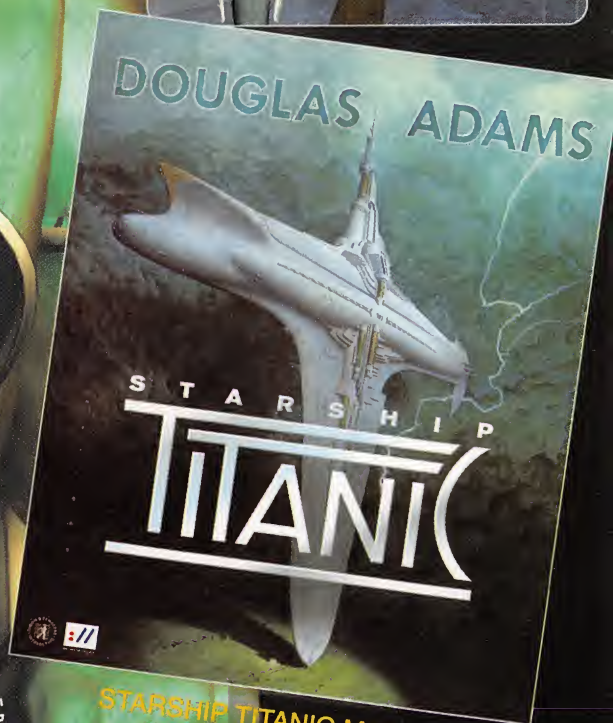


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Dungeon Keeper: Deeper Dungeons

CATEGORY Add on disk

PLAYERS 1-4

PUBLISHER Bullfrog

PRICE STBA

RATING MA15+

AVAILABLE Now

NEED The original DK, 17Mb more Hard Drive Space.

WANT As original.

overall

60%

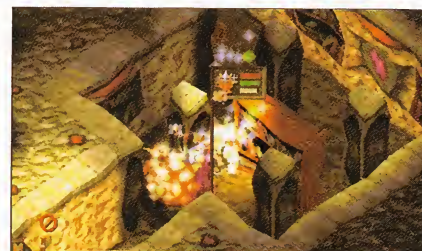
Imagine how cool Dungeon Keeper would be with 3D acceleration, Internet play and new monsters. Keep imagining.

The very mention of having to review another Command & Conquer/Red Alert type mission disk has me usually backing out of the PowerPlay offices with "Err...sorry Ben I've got umm....a trip to the Moon planned, like right about now", followed by a quick sprint out the building. I should have sensed something was wrong when one gloomy day, my exit was suddenly blocked by three hired thugs (aka Ben's Reviewer Enforcement Unit) and the ever threatening looks of Gareth "Fists of Fury" Jones. "Hey Pete, want to review the Dungeon Keeper expansion disk? You like expansion disks don't you Pete?" It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

Ok in all seriousness Deeper Dungeons is not all that horrible. You get 15 new single player missions and 15 new multiplayer maps. The new solo missions are much more challenging than the scenarios in the original. Lots of heroes continually trying to dig their way into your abode, plus enemy keepers

that now have more brains than a dead flea. The increased intelligence of the AI is noticeable and makes for a better game, but it was already rectified in an interim patch released a while back, so you don't need this expansion to smarten up the original game. A huge gaping hole of an omission is the lack of any new monsters, spells or dungeon rooms to toy with. Seems a bit stingy on Bullfrog's part, considering what fun it would have been playing with new units. The further lack of 3D hardware acceleration, and more importantly, TCP/IP support for multiplayer Internet games, is another disappointment.

If you hunger for some quality solo missions, then wander into the Deeper Dungeons. It's a pity that the guys from Bullfrog didn't break the tradition of non-



Add-on packs - a great way to remind yourself about games you bought, played & forgot 3 months ago

event expansion packs, and include some new features to get excited about. Oh well, another mission disc to gather on the dreaded shelf of dust for those wanting more than just missions.

Pete Sharpe

Hoyle Casino '98

CATEGORY Gambling sim

PLAYERS 1 (1-4 Blackjack & Poker)

PUBLISHER Sierra

PRICE STBA

RATING TBA

AVAILABLE Now

NEED 486/66, 8Mb RAM, Win 3.1

WANT 16 Mb RAM, 4xCD-ROM.

overall

73%

A painless way to lose thirty grand in thirty minutes, not bad.

Way back in issue No.10 we reviewed Hoyle Casino. I was a bit of a gambling virgin back in those days, but since then have increased my awareness through a win of ten dollars on a scratchy, and being refused entry to a high profile Casino due to wearing a "Quake - I'm going to frag your sorry ass" T-shirt. Obviously an establishment that needs a lesson in style. Luckily there isn't a dress code for the newly upgraded Hoyle Casino '98 version. A 3D accelerated Roulette wheel or force feedback support for the Pokie machine handle aren't part of the deal, but at least you get a nice shiny sticker with "Updated for '98" on the box.

All the things that you'd expect in a Casino, short of a shaken not stirred Martini are back. Poker Machines, click your way into a senseless oblivion that requires no skill. There was once a C-64 game solely devoted to simulating slot machines, scary hey? Test your ability to calculate the odds with the hypnotic spin of the Roulette wheel or the roll of



Hey, now THIS is gambling! Playing for dog biscuits! Play against the usual assortment of sexy girls, straight-faced professionals, sharks and...erm...a dog

the Craps dice, both games that need some real risk (i.e. money or your house on the line) to get any excitement brewing. Blackjack and Poker fare better, as card sharking with some lively spoken AI opponents actually hinges on skill. With a click of the mouse you can play either of these card games on the Internet courtesy of Sierra's gaming server, pity opponents were a bit thin on the ground when I was looking for a matchup.

The problem with Hoyle Casino '98 is that it's basically a nominal upgrade only. The addition of Friday Night Poker is the only noticeable new addition with it's Poker variants such as High Chicago and Murder. If virtual gambling is your thing Hoyle is the way to go, but this is not different enough from the original to tempt pre '98 owners into updating.

Pete Sharpe

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TAKING THE PYST

PARROTY MAKE PARODIES, WHICH SHOULD BE EVIDENT IN THEIR OH SO WITTY NAME. THUS FAR WE'VE BEEN UN-THRILLED WITH PYST (TAKE A WILD GUESS...), WHICH FELL FLAT, AND NOW THE TWO NEWIES YOU SEE ON THIS VERY PAGE. COMING SOON FROM THE CRAZY KIDS AT PARROTY IS DRIVEN (THE SEQUEL TO PYST) AND THE ONE WE'RE ACTUALLY REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO; MICROSHAFT WINBLOWS 98.

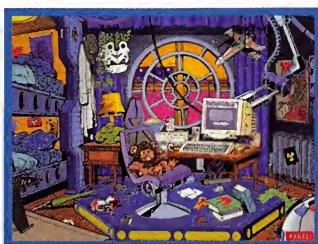
STAR WARPED Parrotty Interactive/GTI

IT'S FUNNY STAR WARS

Because we're lucky enough to have in our employ the most die-hard Star Wars fan in this known universe, Mr Malcolm Campbell the PCPP Art Director (the guy that makes these pages so damn pretty), we test-ran this at him. "It's not freaky enough for the freaks, and not accessible enough for the newbies." Thus spake Malcy Malc, effectively terminating any need for further comment, but hey, we don't fully understand Malcy's comment either, so here's the juice:

Hosting the CD in the form of an almost ever-present voice over are yo funky dudes Brian and Adam, who regularly proclaim themselves to the most fanatical Star Wars fans ever. Yeah, OK, whatever. They're your garden variety smart-talking all-attitude sassy yanks - not in the cool and amusing You Don't Know Jack mould, instead their nearest relative in the food chain is a Rock 'n' Roll Wrestling commentator. Let's just say it's highly localised and didn't sit well in this laid back corner of the world.

Within the Star Warped... multimedia experience, I think it's best called, are 5... activities, plus a few hidden specials. While the artists and programmers seem-



ingly spent a few months at work on this product, the concept itself reeks of a happy-lunch, back of a napkin job. Lame, cheap, tame, flat and dull. There's the Time Machine. Pick your favourite Star Warsian and look at the 4-5 cartoon stills of them in various stages of their lives, accompanied by the voice over boys telling wacky tales. No moving parts of any substance. Whack the Ewok looked promising, but mouse clicking the little critter and pole barging him off a rope bridge was interesting for a good 5-10 seconds. Salvation, we thought, was the You Don't Know Jack ripoff trivia quiz - which only allows 1 player... nice one.

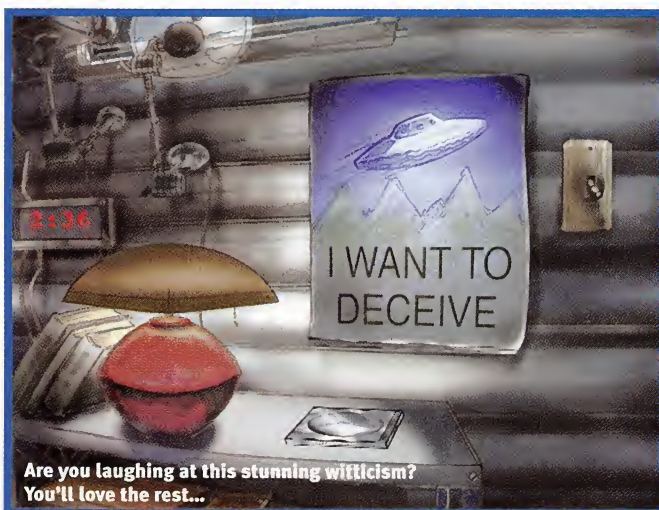
Go dig up the Star Wars pillowcases you had as a kid and stare at them for a more gratifying Star Wars experience. *B.M.*

Nothing cheers a bloke, at the end of a hard day, like a good solid, Ewok whacking



THE X-FOOLS Parrotty Interactive/GTI

CAN'T GET ENOUGH X-FILES?



Are you laughing at this stunning witticism?
You'll love the rest...

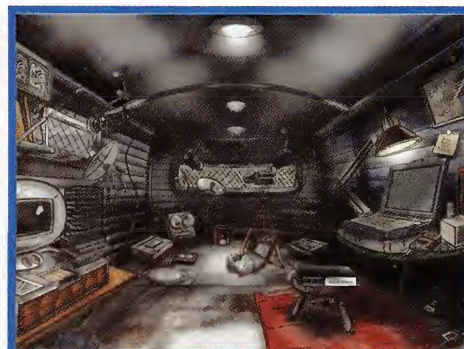


there's the Pac Man game. Very excited about this, we were, but sadly the programmer of this bit hadn't had the rules explained too clearly. The little Pac-ghosts don't actually acknowledge your existence in any way. Park your critter anywhere you like and only pure,

Ha ha! The X-Fools! Good one! This Parrotty parody is a better value proposition than Star Warped. There's more to do - there's actually stuff to do in the first place. You'll spend ages exploring this CD, due mainly to the vast expanse hot mouse menu area, which isn't exactly intuitive. There are bogus conspiracy theories, there is a You Don't Know Jack clone, there is a possibly amusing database - and

random luck will be the cause of its demise if Pac-ghost runs into you as it cruises through its preset journey.

Oh well, there's probably something good on TV... *B.M.*



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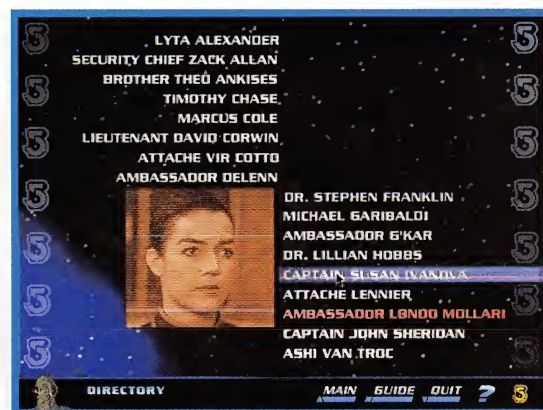
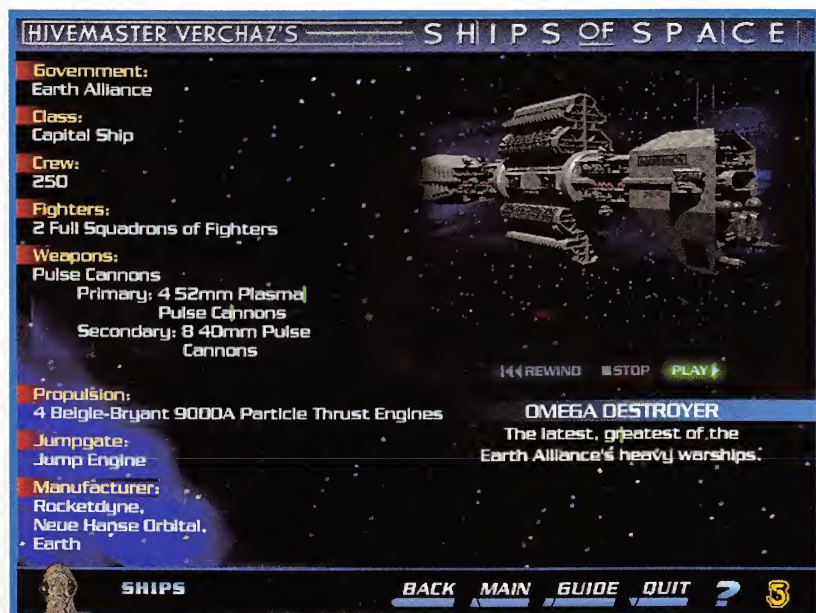
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THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI'S Babylon 5

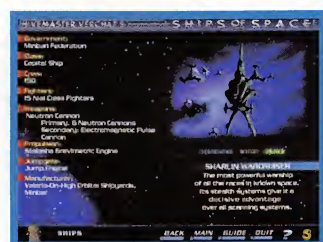
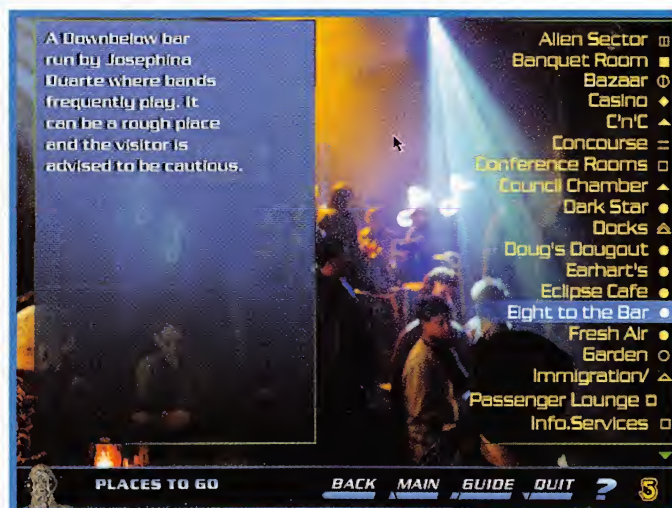


The now dearly departed Commander Ivanova, and to the left, where she's gone. Yep, it's now Captain Ivanova

Connoisseurs will already have eschewed the anti-septically stagnant, boring, and dreary world of Star Trek (and all its even more boring spin offs) full of inbred jokes and references designed for mal-contented and socially maladjusted nerds a'la the comic guy from the Simpsons for the Quality with a capital Q Sci-fi series called Babylon 5. The question isn't whether Bab 5 is bucketloads more interesting, gripping, and watchable - the only question is by how much (and the answer is 'a hell of a lot'). But enough, everyone with any sense is already nodding their heads in affirmation of Bab 5's magnificence, and now we can all rejoice, learn and relax in the company of this excellent (if somewhat short) multimedia experience.

Future shock

The first thing that will strike people when they load up is just how far behind we are - because the CD contains plenty of information about events we're yet to have the privilege to view. For those amongst us that have resisted the temptation to read ahead through the internet (hop over to <http://www.midwinter.com/lurk/countries/master/eplist.html> for



those with weak wills), this is going to be a challenging experience - how to enjoy this wonderful CD without ruining the actual viewing of the series when (finally) it returns. But you can do it, or at least I managed to go through the whole thing without gaining too much information about the

future of Bab 5, apart from the odd line or two of text that I errantly read (President Sheridan!?! Prime Minister Mollari!?!). But I feel a lot better now that I've ruined it for you too...

Music too...

Anyway, as for the CD itself it's not actually a CD. Well, it is, but there's two of them. One is the multimedia extravaganza, and a second bonus CD is also included, with 'the best of Babylon 5 music'. That's right, some of the best of the scores used for Bab 5 are all in the CD, along with a few glib interviews with JMS and

his cohorts, but this is mostly just a plug for the upcoming game (which looks really cool). Whatever, if you like it you got it, and if you don't then it isn't costing you any more anyway. The multimedia CD is where the action is though, and while it doesn't contain nearly as much depth as I had hoped for, what is there is well presented and makes for a nice few hours of wandering around the virtual decks of the 'last, best hope for peace in the universe'. The 'tour' is divided into five main areas; weapons, ships, governments, people, and places. There's also a section where you can listen to all the different warning sirens on the space station, but funnily enough I didn't really get off on this very much. Each section has at least a short text attachment as well as a quicktime movie sequence, and some are guaranteed to bring back memories and fuel your addiction. The 'people', 'government', and 'ships' sections are all fairly detailed, though notably in each there is not one single mention of the Vorlons or their inordinately cool ships (and nothing about Sinclair/Valen either). As cool as the CD's are, I'm really not sure whether to recommend them or not. As much as I loved it, it only took me a couple of hours to go through, and I'm not sure that I'd pay money for it because of this. But still, if you're a fan there's plenty to keep you interested...at least for a while.

Gareth Jones



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OBSIDIAN

Jere Lawrence



HANDY HINTS

HOW TO MAKE YOUR 3Dfx DO THOSE ELUSIVE 800X600 RESOLUTIONS.

Anyone who was owned a 3Dfx is probably wondering how to increase its resolution beyond that of 640 x 480. The reason a 3Dfx cannot normally process a scene greater than 640 x 480 is because you need more than a 2 MB Z-Buffer. The trick then, is to disable Z Buffering if the game allows it. So the next time you're looking at a Direct 3D setup screen, providing the option is available, disable the Z buffer and set the resolution to 800 x 600. The 3Dfx will comply quite nicely.

READER'S WRITE

VIRGE ANY GOOD?

I've got an S3 Virge which is supposed to be 2D, but it can still smooth out all the textures on games like Monster Truck Madness and Skrap. So, I was wondering if it really was 2D and not 3D, or if all 2D cards can do this anyway.

Ben

P.S. How good is my card, anyway (it has 2Mb RAM (don't know what type)).

Yes, an S3 Virge can do certain 3D operations. Bilinear filtering being one of them (the smoothing you're seeing.) It can also perform rudimentary 3D acceleration as well, however it's never been a competitor to the big players such as 3Dfx. As for how good your card is, in the big 3D roundup I did for the PC PowerPlay Hot Hardware Guide, the S3 Virge received an overall powerbench of 28.8695, or 4th last out of over 20 cards.

POWERVR OR 3Dfx?

I was reading in 3D Tech News in Issue 20 January 1998 a reader's letter about which video card to buy, Apocalypse or Diamond Viper V330. You guys said to buy an Apocalypse 5D but he should also get a 3Dfx as well. I'm wanting to buy an Apocalypse 5D and I want to know why to buy a 3Dfx as well. Why spend so much money on the 5D when you are not going to use the Power VR technology but instead use the 3Dfx?

Wouldn't it be better to buy a 2D card then buy a 3Dfx? Or, by having a Power VR as well as a 3Dfx does this allow you to play any game whether it's Power VR or 3Dfx? Can you use the Power VR technology on some games then switch back to the 3Dfx. I hope you understand what I'm saying it's hard to explain in writing. Thanks for your time.

Andrew Hill

Andrew, this is a perfect letter which coincidentally you almost answer yourself, and something that I was going to mention as part of this column.

The second paragraph of your letter is essentially your own answer, yes you can use both accelerators, switching between them and play any game you desire. As for my answer, this can be best clarified by examining the 2 type of games players. Gamer 1 is a zealot whose entire life is gaming, me for an example. This type of individual wants the most advanced gaming system possible with every avenue and game option available. Gamer 2 is still a dedicated gamer but often has other hobbies or is satisfied with the best/most supported solution.

The Apocalypse 5D, despite being our Hot Hardware guide Video Card winner is not the best gaming solution for gamer 2. Gamer number 2 needs only a 2D card with appropriate video performance and a 3Dfx. The 3Dfx in this configuration will handle all Direct X activities as well as Open GL and 3Dfx native mode. Basically every type of 3D accelerated game can be played on a 3Dfx except for Power SGL, which is what the Power VR supports.

The reason that Gamer 1 would want an Apocalypse 5D solution is because the 2D performance is outstanding for Windows. Its Direct X support is highly adequate and although the Power VR cannot do translucency it can achieve resolutions up to 1024 x 768 with minimal performance degradation. The 3Dfx without turning off Z-buffering cannot achieve a resolution over 640 x 480. The Apocalypse 5D can also play the Power SGL games which including Ultimate Race and Pure Vex are some of the most playable and graphically impressive 3D accelerated titles on the market.

For Gamer number 1, which constitutes a lot of our readers, a machine with an Apocalypse 5D and a 3Dfx can offer the best performance for every type of game on the market, including native titles for both. As you can run both accelerators in the machine without any difficulty at all, it comprises a perfect solution.

All you need to do now is decide which gamer you are. Whichever way you decide, be sure to buy the 3Dfx card first and make additions after.

BENCHTEST: DIAMOND FIRE GL1000 PRO

Memory 8Mb

Chipset 3D labs Permedia 2 featuring:

Hardware Rasterization, texture mapping, double buffering, 16-bit Z-buffering, and integrated geometry setup. Up to 1 million texture mapped polygons/sec. 83 million texture mapped pixels/sec. True 3D resolutions up to 1024 x 768 double buffered with a 16 bit Z buffer. Integrated StereoGraphics connector.

Price \$519.00

Powerbench 2D 43.4306

Powerbench 3D 63.5259

Powerbench 53.4783

Ease of Installation: Good

The first thing that should be identified about the Diamond Fire GL 1000 Pro is that it's a high end CAD 3D card primarily aimed at the publishing and multimedia intensive aspects of business. That said, the fact that it plays Direct X games at an incredibly fast speed is something that's quite impressive. That and its maximum resolution of 1920 x 1080. Can anyone say squinty, squinty blindness?

Featuring the 3Dlabs Permedia 2 chipset, the first thing that has to be said is that 3Dlabs got their act together. Their first card the Permedia was a nightmare to use in a machine that had more than 1 PCI device in it. Gladly, I can inform you that the interrupt driven Geometry processor of the Permedia 1 has been replaced with a non interrupt driven Geometry processor. This thankfully hasn't affected performance at all as the Permedia 2 way outperforms the Permedia 1.

The 2D performance of the Permedia 2 seems curiously lacking when compared to the Apocalypse 5D or the Riva 128. In real world terms though, there were no glaring elements of performance degradation in Windows and overall did seem as fast as the Riva or the V2100 despite benchmarks saying otherwise.

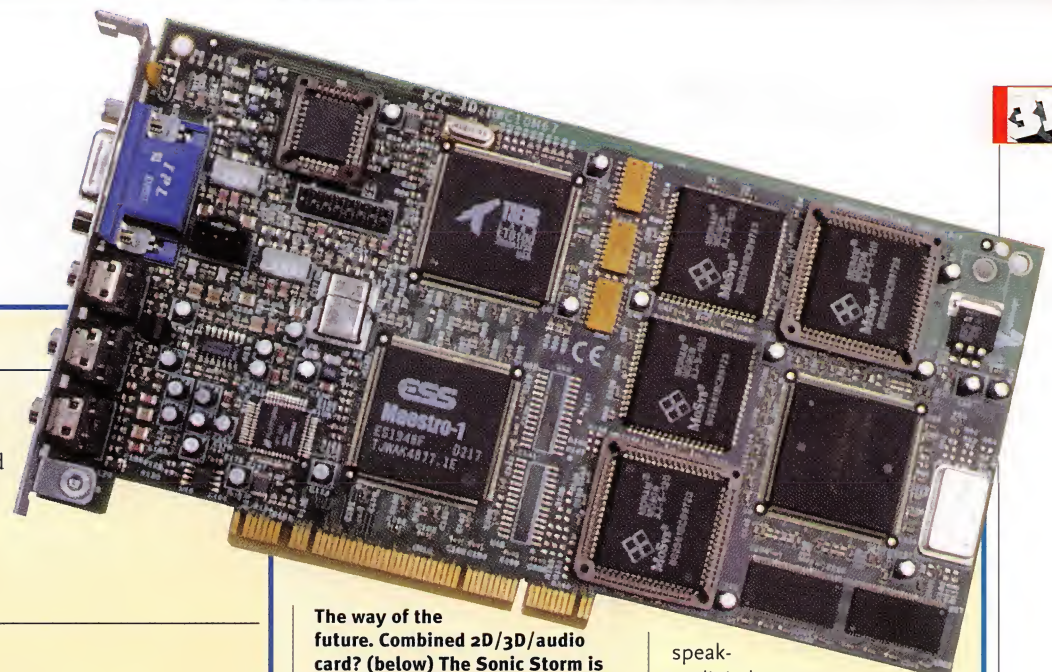
3D performance was another amazing sight to behold. Like

the V2100, Direct X performance in benchmark terms were faster than the 3Dfx and performance in Wipeout 2097 was of exceptional quality. The most dramatic and impressive of the tests was running Wipeout 2097 at 1024 x 768 and seeing it perform as fast as the 3Dfx.

In 3D where the Fire GL was lacking however was in the Open GL area. Quake 2 was a rather unimpressive affair and showed none of the incredible performance seen in the Direct X applications. First problems with the Open GL Quake was the fact that the environment lacked rich colour. The 3Dfx and Power VR implementations of Quake 2 feel alive and atmospheric. The Fire GL implementation of GL Quake 2 seemed washed out and more like the painful brown-ness of the original Quake.

To re-iterate on an original point though, the Fire GL is aimed at corporations first and then the home user. As I have already explained in answering a letter, a powerful 3D accelerated primary video card is still of use to the power gamer. Especially considering that the Fire GL can handle 1024 x 768 Direct X so well.

Ultimately, a 3Dfx is still a requirement and nothing, not even the Voodoo Rush has been able to unseat it as the premiere 3D accelerator.



BENCHTEST:

APOCALYPSE 5D SONIC

Chipset Tseng ET6100 2D processor and NEC PCX2 3D processor.

Memory 6Mb or 8Mb

Price: \$695.00 (6Mb RAM) \$789.00 (8Mb RAM)

Powerbench 2D 52.0645

Powerbench 3D 57.7751

Powerbench 54.9197

Ease of Installation: Good

The Apocalypse 5D Sonic is essentially an Apocalypse 5D with the ESS AGOGO-XP audio processor built in. In all the tests we carried out, the Apocalypse 5D sonic benchmarked identically to the Apocalypse 5D we tested 5 months ago. The sonic addition is what makes a difference however, and is what we will concentrate on here.

ESS does not have the best reputation of the

audio designers out there. Famed more for their cheap clone audio cards and even cheaper notebook sound chipsets, they have been the domain of second PC's or budget machines the world over. Why then Videologic have added this to their high quality Apoc 5D is beyond me.

To start with the bad news, the low quality problems associated with other ESS devices is painfully apparent with the Sonic-XP. Like the Sonic-XP's predecessors, when this card is connected to an amplifier or decent pair of amplified speakers, a most annoying hiss is constantly apparent. On a low end pair of speakers, the interference isn't noticeable, but as soon as you connect it to a decent amplifier, the all too annoying background noise will grate on your nerves

The way of the future. Combined 2D/3D/audio card? (below) The Sonic Storm is also available as a stand alone

every second the PC is turned on.

Every effort was made to muffle the sounds too. From muting every device but the wave driver and even the wave driver itself, only muting of the entire card itself, or disabling it from the Win 95 device properties would shut it up. This not only proves that it isn't "transformer hum" being picked up, but an error that occurs when the card is activated.

Enough of the negatives then. On the positive side of the Sonic-XP is the fact that it's a PCI device. Whether you realise it or not, that old 16 bit Sound blaster 16 or AWE 32 you may be using can actually bottleneck your 3D accelerator. In games such as Quake 2 or Jedi Knight a massive performance increase can be gained through use of the Sonic-XP. In the case of Jedi Knight, frame rate improved dramatically when an old AWE 32 was replaced for the ESS.

Sonic output from the card was supposed to be 3D, however the card doesn't even offer 4

speaker digital surround, only 2 speakers are supported. Although a slight difference in audio output was discernible, there was no sound improvements as dramatic as the Ensoniq 3D or Aural 3D used by the Monster Sound. In fact, a pair of \$100 Creative SBS180 speakers produced better 3D surround emulation.

Ultimately, the Sonic-XP is not a worthy addition to the Apoc 5D at all. Although the logic of placing a PCI accelerated sound card on a 3D accelerator is extremely good, the ESS was the wrong choice. The Apocalypse 5D, with its ability for Power SGL and fast Windows 2D is still an ideal primary video card.

Ultimately, if you only have a pair of small forward facing speakers and were thinking of an Apoc 5D, then the Apoc 5D Sonic wouldn't be a bad choice at all, especially seeing as a performance increase over an ISA sound card would be gained. If you have an amplifier or amplified speakers though forget it, just get an Apoc 5D.



**THE
VOODOO 2 IS
COMING...**

The Voodoo 2 draws ever closer and just this day we were informed here at PC PowerPlay that we would be receiving a test unit as soon as it arrives. To get you all excited in the interim, here are the stats for the Voodoo 2:

The Voodoo2 Chipset

PERFORMANCE

- Base Chipset: 80 million bilinear-filtered, mip-mapped pixels/second fill rate.
- 2 texture units: 160 million effective simultaneous two-texture, bilinear filtered, mip-mapped pixels/second fill rate.
- In SLI mode (2 Voodoo's in machine): 320 million pixels/second fill rate 2 million triangles/ second with real game triangles.

RENDERING:

- Triangle-based raster engine with Gouraud modulation.
- 16-bit integer and floating-point z-buffering with biasing.
- Automatic hardware and back-face culling (culling = remove non-visible triangles, like ones 1 pixel big).
- Transparency and chroma-key with dedicated color mask.
- Alpha blending on source and destination pixels.
- Sub-Pixel and SubTexel correction to 0.4x0.4 res.
- Per-pixel and per-vertex atmospheric fog and haze effects simultaneous with alpha blending.

- Polygon edge anti-aliasing (No more blurry 3Dfx scenes).

3D TEXTURE-MAPPING:

- Perspective Correct 3D texture mapping.
- Full speed bi/tri-linear filtering. (Tri linear, definitely no more 3Dfx blurry scenes).
- 8-bit paletted textures with full speed bilinear filtering.

MEMORY:

- 3.6GB/second memory bandwidth.
- 2-4MB of EDO DRAM frame buffer memory.
- 2-4MB of EDO DRAM texture memory per texture unit.



(right) Pure Vex
(below) Might & Magic VI

- Max. 12MB total texture memory.

DISPLAY:

- Supports resolutions. up to 1024x768 with double and triple buffering.
- Constant frame rate buffer-swap management.
- 16-bit and 24-bit gamma correction on video back end.

What makes the Voodoo 2 so impressive is that the new chipset is a super-set of the original Voodoo card, and the new Glide for the card is a super-set of the Glide for the Voodoo, which means it is fully backward compatible in both Hardware and Software! The chipset is also AGP compatible, and AGP boards will ship as soon as AGP motherboards gain market penetration.

Another new feature is improved fog performance, thanks to the 64-bit hardware fog table. Previously, the amount of fog always had to either stay steady or increase as objects moved further into a scene. With the Voodoo 2, however, developers can create zones of denser fog in front of weaker fog. Effort has been made as well to reduce the "fog banding" that results in objects "popping" from one fog level to another. All fog effects now are calculated on a per-pixel basis.

As for release, so far it's Diamond and Orchid neck and neck AGAIN. Diamond have announced the Monster Voodoo 2, and Orchid the Righteous Voodoo 2.

IMAGE QUALITY, THE 3Dfx VS THE RENDITION VERSION 2.

One of the most interesting debates to emerge of late is the question as to why the Rendition 2 has been producing sharper images than the 3Dfx in Quake 2. The answer actually lies in how the 3Dfx handles its Anti Aliasing. It does it by generating a bunch of single pixel triangles along the edges that are alpha blended. To date, the only game that used it was Tomb Raider. The problem however is that doing it this way, you can't use the Z-buffer on the Voodoo, so it



isn't going to happen in Quake.

The Verite on the other hand does do real Anti-Aliasing, giving it the sharper images and textures without sucking out the performance. Where the 1000 and 2100 look better than 3Dfx, but are a touch slower, the V2200 should be on par with the 3Dfx. We're still waiting on a 2200 to review BTW. Our goal is to have a screenshot with Ultima Online, TV input and a DVD Movie running concurrently, now that's what you want in a video card!

GAMES

Pure Vex

Following the trend of incredibly playable and unbelievably impressive titles for the Power VR comes Pure Vex by NEC. Pure Vex is just like the good ol' vertically scrolling shoot-em-ups of before but totally in 3D. So perfect is the playability, you'd swear you were playing an Arcade machine, more amazing though are the number of views you can choose. There's the in game above ship isometric view which offers the best look, however there's also a view directly

behind the ship like in Space Harrier. However, for the perfect feel of the arcades, there's a straight top down view (making it appear 2D) and for fans of the really old days, a Zaxxon view.

These neat little tricks however are nothing compared to the sheer playability of Pure Vex, with perfect arcade accuracy, speed and weapon power ups are abundant and delightfully destructive. As enemies are quickly destroyed around you, the frame rate never drops, it gives anything for the 3Dfx a total run for the money and proves that more Power SGL titles for the Power VR could make it a far more definitive card of choice.

Graphically, Pure Vex looks fantastic running at 800 x 600 in 24 bit colour. As with all Power VR games, the colours are crisper and much clearer than any of the other accelerators. If you have a Power VR2 then Pure Vex is a must try, and one to gloat to your 3Dfx owning friends about. To get Pure Vex, you need look no further than this month's Cover CD, it's included.

Speed Rally

There are too many driving games out there that focus primarily on the concentration and level of precision required in driving fast around either race tracks or rally roads. Heck, if I want this for real I need only drive on the M2 at peak hour. Thank the skies then for the Screamer series of games

IDIOT BOX

the easy version

SO WHAT'S A 3D ACCELERATOR ANYWAY?

A 3D accelerator is a device that allows processing of the most complex forms of calculations, those being 3D. A 3D accelerator therefore is a piece of hardware that allows your computer to compute and display 3 dimensional scenes much faster than a singular processor can do. 3D accelerators these days are incorporated on primary video cards such as the Apocalypse 5D and also on secondary cards, such as the 3Dfx Voodoo. More than one 3D accelerator can be installed in a PC and we've had as many as 3 different accelerators working on one machine.



(above) Speed Rally (left) Descent 3



that allow you to just put your foot down and keep burning around the track until you're either number 1, or so much scrap metal on the ground.

Not everyone's cup of tea admittedly, the successor to Screamer 2 hasn't been named Screamer 3, but Speed Rally. It features the same fast action of the Screamers but now has 3Dfx native support built in. A good job has been made with the 3Dfx too. Of considerable note is that the horrid black mask around 3Dfx sprites has been resolved in Speed Rally. Watching a 2D tree tear past you looks great as it actually blends in with the 3D wall of trees further behind it.

Other features of note is that the background scenery, a giant 2D scrolling image is created to blend in with foreground objects extremely well. The effect is excellent and offers a unique level of depth perception to the game.

The game itself is extremely fast and never misses a beat making for pure arcade driving fun. Put your foot down, enjoy the scenery, run other cars off the road and force your way to number 1. Good fun!

Road Rash 3D

For those that loved Road Rash, Road Rash 3D is tentatively scheduled for a March release. The most striking improvement over its popular predecessors is the creation of a 3D world populated with biker gangs and interconnected tracks. The player will race against and fight the members of four gangs, each with their own distinctive bike, racing style, and combative attitude. The 200+ miles of tracks are all located in one 3D world and each gang is headquartered in the region that best suits their racing style.

Redline Racer

Redline Racer is a new title to come from Digital Sports and will feature the ability to simulate real bike physics. They claim that the feel of the player's bike will change according to different driving conditions such as slick pavement or icy roads. This realism will be enhanced by graphical special effects such as sparks, smoke, and weather conditions that change from torrential rain to drifting fog and hazardous blizzards. All this plus real time lighting effects, backdrop anima-

tions, and fully animated bike riders running at 30 - 60 frames/sec.

Descent 3

Those smitten with the Descent series of games (do I hear David Wildgoose's name in there?) will be pleased to know that Descent 3 is nearing release. Descent 3: Freespace will lean heavily towards X-Wing Vs TIE and Privateer II territory, that is to say it's set in outer space, rather than in stifling corridors like the original. New features include computer opponents that 'learn' how an opponent operates, a 'terrain engine' that kicks in should a player enter the atmosphere of a planet, some eerily gloomy visuals and marvelous Dolby Surround Sound.

Flight Unlimited 2

Flight Unlimited 2, the most graphically impressive of the flight simulators is set to release part 2. It will feature 3D support through Direct X and the game environment will feature a beautifully detailed replica of the entire San Francisco Bay Area. Rivers, inlets, roads, even 3Com Park, they're all in there and supposedly placed just so.

Flying Nightmares 2 delayed

The game we have all been waiting for has been delayed again. We received word from Eidos that they had to recently rewrite some major sections of the code, and has pushed release back to late Autumn of 98.

Might and Magic VI

Featuring three hundred non-player characters, almost two hundred monsters, ninety-nine spells, and a huge, dynamic gam-

ing world. Might and Magic VI will deliver the complexity that traditional role-playing fans love, but also provide state of the art automapping and note-taking functions. The icing on the cake however is that the polished Direct 3D enhanced graphics will broaden the game's appeal beyond the hard-core role-playing game audience and offer something for other players.

Tiberian Sun

News is just in that Tiberian Sun, unlike our previously printed rumours, will not be using a modified version of the Blade Runner engine. It now seems that it will feature an entirely new, re-written 3D accelerated engine that supports the best 3D accelerator video cards out there as opposed to DirectX. Other secrets we've gleaned are that new units include an electric fence that you can put around your base and three, not 2 sides. The third side will be a group of Tiberian mutated freaks.

Also, the maps of Tiberian Sun will be much larger than those in C&C (about 4x the size) and 2x the sizes of the biggest Red Alert maps plus will include varied weather conditions such as snow, rain, clouds and smog. Dynamic weather is also included with some missions starting out sunny but ending up in rainstorms. Unconfirmed is the possibility of units that affect the landscape such as earthquake and volcano erupting devices. Can't wait!



THE ROCK 'N' RIDE SIMULATOR

What's missing from the perfect home setup? You've got one mother of a processor, huge amounts of RAM, the biggest and best joystick there is, a huge monitor, and the best speakers money can buy. But something's missing in your life - a chair that moves! Well, if you've got the dosh, then there's no reason to wait any longer, for the Rock'n'Ride simulator chair is available for your home, albeit only through mail order to the US.

Like all the really good ideas, the Rock'n'Ride is a simple idea put into practice well. It's a sturdy chair (that looks a little like a beach chair) with a couple of air compressors that push and pull the chair in reaction to the positioning of the joystick, so if you look down, the chair moves downwards, and so on. All you need to do is attach your monitor to the extended arm (which will take weight up to 35 pounds - or roughly an average 17 inch monitor), so whichever way the chair is facing, the monitor will always remain in front of you. We haven't been able to get our hands on an actual unit to play with, unfortunately, but from what we've seen it looks like a pretty cool experience. There's

also a subwoofer attached to the base of the chair for those oh so necessary pumping bass sounds, and the best news is that it requires no special software to use - any game with joystick support will work with the Rock'n'Ride. All that happens is that the joystick is plugged into the actual chair itself, and the chair attached to the game port of your PC, so the chair receives the joysticks positional movements and reacts accordingly. The bad news is that at present there isn't a way to use rudder pedals, though this is planned for the future, apparently. And then there's the price - it ain't cheap, you're looking at around US\$700 plus shipping costs, but for the ultimate interactive experience you could do a lot worse. For orders or more information head over to www.rocknride.com.



Look this cool! Yes kids, upset the pets and live a little

POWERAMP

Only for certain games, but oh how good they are - with this slab of game power

Depending on what games you favour, something like this, despite the silly name, might come in very handy indeed. The first thing you're going to notice is how big it is - we're talking about the same size as your average arcade control pad area. Which shouldn't be all that surprising because that's essentially what this behemoth of a joystick is. It plugs in to your keyboard port rather than the joystick port (and then the keyboard is piggy backed on top of it), and works by emulating keystrokes - which means it's not going to be very good for analogue commands. On the plus side however, there are enough buttons for even the most complicated games out there, and for something like Tomb Raider 2 or the like, it would be almost perfect. It comes with 4 'macro' programmable buttons so you can program in one button to emulate a series of keystrokes - perfect for fighting games and action adventure titles like TR, Duke Nukem, Quake, or the like and an autofire facility as well (which can also be programmed for different speeds of repetition). It's big, it's functional, and it's very versatile. For more information you can head on over to the ACT Labs site on <http://www.actlab.com/gamegear/arsenal.htm>



THRUSTMASTER

Attack Throttle

As any serious flight sim junkie knows, a joystick alone just won't cut it in today's world of high tech funky ass aircraft, and an attack throttle of some sort along with some rudders is almost a prerequisite for that all important realistic feel. Thrustmaster already have the WCS Mk II and the esoteric TQS out there, but their latest entry into the throttle arena looks to be the goods. Unlike the WCS II, Thrustmaster promise that the "ThrustMapper" software included for assigning keys will be much more intuitive, and might actually work this time - which would be fantastic. They've also updated the look of the throttle and gone for a 'modern military styling' look - whatever that means.

The actual throttle comes with a couple of indents, one for idle and one for when the afterburner kicks in, so you won't have to move your eyes away from the monitor so much during play. There's also the fairly standard 4 action buttons mounted on the front face of the throttle, and a three position 'dogfight' switch, which in

effect triples the amount of programmable buttons on the throttle and joystick - one set of buttons can be programmed for air to air attacks, another for ground attacks, and so on. And then there's the price - the WCS II is currently retailing for around \$260, but the Attack Throttle clocks in at \$199.95, which should make it even more attractive.

More info from www.thrustmaster.com, or from the Australian distributors' Metro Games on 039 329 2999.



A simplified & modernised WCS MkII is what this is, a throttle is a great thing to have

Time Stryder

VR Sports Exercise Bike

Wiggling a joystick for hours on end and clicking a mouse button thousands of times each hour might improve the dexterity of your middle finger (which might well come in handy at some point), but sadly, sitting in a chair playing games doesn't do much for your general level of fitness, and there is a tendency for your body to become a little lumpy in places where society says it shouldn't.

Rejoice then, for straight from the storage space of a Demtel-like organisation in America comes the solution to all your woes. Yes, that's right customers, you can play computer games and work out at the same time! Want to run fast in Quake? Simply pedal faster! Want to hit top speed in NFS 2? Just pedal faster, and watch those unsightly kilos shed by the wayside. Just like the Rock'n'Ride featured elsewhere in this weird and wonderful edition of Hotware, the Time Stryder plugs in to the standard gameport of your PC and all you need to do is start pedalling madly away to any Windows '95 joystick supported game.

Sure, it might sound completely ridiculous, but thanks to the addition of a couple of joystick/gamepad style controls on either hand rest, most in-game movements should be easy to acclimatise to with the new system. The hard part, obviously, is to keep pedalling, and pedalling, and pedalling. But if you're a fitness nut with an equal dedication towards gaming, then this is heaven sent, and if you've been looking in the mirror and thinking to yourself 'things are gonna change, dammit, I'm gonna get fit again!', then this might just push you in the right direction. Sadly though, the Time Stryder is not available locally anymore - as Jamie Childress, Exergame President puts it, the Time Stryder was "just a bit ahead of its time" for Australia. Ah well, here's hoping it's on the way back. This is the way of the future ladies and gentlemen, let there be no mistake about it. For ordering and more information head over to <http://www.hypermax.com/exergame>

The future of gaming.....?



WINRADIO



(which will take weight up to 35 pounds - or roughly an average 17 inch monitor), so whichever way the chair is facing, the monitor will always remain in front of you. We haven't been able to get our hands on an actual unit to play with, unfortunately, but from what we've seen it looks like a

What's missing from the perfect home setup? You've got one mother of a processor, huge amounts of RAM, the biggest and best joystick there is, a huge monitor, and the best speakers money can buy. But something's missing in your life - a chair that moves! Well, if you've got the dosh, then there's no reason to wait any longer, for the Rock'n'Ride simulator chair is available for your home, albeit only through mail order to the US.

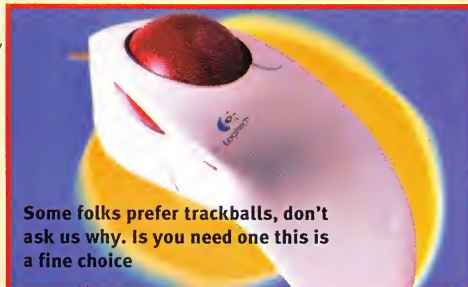
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Logitech Trackman Marble FX

Mousies aren't for everyone, but luckily for those non-mousie people there are other possibilities. Like a trackball, for instance, and if you're into trackballs then



Some folks prefer trackballs, don't ask us why. Is you need one this is a fine choice

Logitech are the ones to look out for. They've developed what they call 'marble technology', which detects and tracks movement in a similar way to the human eye rather than the more conventional system of wheels, rollers and shafts. Along with this new technology, you get all the bits and pieces you'd expect from a trackball - it's got four buttons, a trackball, and a comfy design to boot. The Logitech software bundle included is, as per usual, excellent, and enables easy scrolling and zooming from within Office '97, along with Logitech's 'Hyperjump' and 'Cyberjump' software, which allows some of the buttons on the trackball to be programmed to emulate common Windows '95 and Internet browser tasks. So if you're on the lookout for a dependable, functional, versatile and useful trackball, then look no further than the Marble FX, though at \$189 it might stretch the bank balance just a little. More info from www.logitech.com or from Dataflow on (02) 9417 9797.

Logitech Mouseman +

Nowadays, mousies are one of the most important peripheral devices for PC's. Where would we be without our mousies - like how would we play Quake for instance? But since the inception of the mouse, not a lot has been improved upon, really (Mac's still only have one button along with that chunky design. But that's Mac's, so who cares?). Logitech are right at the forefront of the mouse brigade, and they've built themselves up to be the worlds largest manufacturer of mice - and with good reason too. They make quality, and they aren't afraid to innovate a little either. Take their latest, the 'Mouseman +'. It's still your common garden variety mouse with a couple of buttons and rollerball, but it also has one of those nifty wheels in the middle for zooming and scrolling from within Office '97 applications and Internet browsers, as well as a third configurable thumb button. As with the Trackman, the software included contains both the cyberjump and hyperjump applications, and the mouse itself comes with a whopping three year warranty. More info from www.logitech.com or Dataflow on (02) 9417 9797





DIAMOND
MULTIMEDIA

Combine Monster 3D with Monster Sound and you'll experience "The Ultimate Gaming Experience!"

Diamond Multimedia make gaming so real it'll make you tense, anxious and screaming for more!



Are you ready to be chewed up, spat out and totally satisfied? Then brace yourself because the Diamond Monster 3D has arrived and it's about to blow your PC away with the ultimate in arcade-quality graphic performance.

Based on the state-of-the-art 3Dfx Voodoo 3D accelerator, Monster 3D's advanced PCI-bus architecture works with your existing graphics card to transform your ordinary computer into a monstrous gaming machine. All for a price that'll make your head spin.

Monster 3D sets a new standard in 3D graphics performance with lightning-fast, full-screen 3D rendering and outrageous special effects, giving you gaming so real, it hurts. And, it's the fastest performing Microsoft Windows® 95 Direct3D accelerator available, with equally high-performance 3D in MS-DOS and Windows® 3.1x. Plus, Monster 3DXL comes bundled with Whiplash™/Fatal Racing™, VR/Actua

Soccer™ '96, Descent™ II: Destination Quartzon 3D, MechWarrior® 2, Scorched Planet™, a Microsoft™ WIN 95 Sampler CD 2 and over fifteen other monstrous games that'll leave you begging for mercy.

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QUAKE II

THE TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES THE MAGIC REAL.

GEORGE ARGY

1d software are renowned for being perfectionists when it comes to creating games. Their games push the limits of efficient code, and take advantage of the latest hardware while trying to be backwards compatible with older systems. Quake 2 is no exception and has shown the world that good code, great gameplay for both solo and multiplay can co-exist. But how do they do it, and what's so special about the pretty stuff on the screen anyway. Next time you see someone at a party who claims that Blood or Duke Nukem 3D was more 'realistic' than Quake, blow them away with a quick recital from these hallowed pages...

3D ENGINE

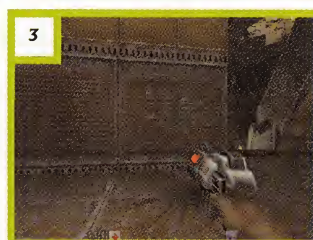
Back in the days when Doom was hot property, John Romero was quoted as saying that every time id started a new game, they chucked out the previous game's engine and started from scratch. This may have been true from Wolfenstein to Doom to Quake, but Romero is gone and Quake 2's engine is very much Quake with bells on - great, whopping, deafening bells though! The most obvious improvement is in the size and complexity of the levels. Quake's engine was limited in the amount of 'brushes' it could draw at one time, and thus did not like large open spaces or multi-tiered rooms. This is a different story in Quake 2, partly due to the engine being optimised, but also due to the removal of the moving sky which used valuable processor time. The sky in Quake 2 is a static bitmap that can be rotated in



any direction but cannot create funky effects like moving clouds. (SEE 1 & 1.1)

OBJECT PROPERTIES

Quake's objects were pretty limited in terms of being 'realistic' objects. Quake 2 changes this by adding more properties to brushes like Transparency and Destructibility, for want of a better word. Transparency is something that was only possible in Quake thanks to the magic of 3D cards. Even then, a map had to be re-VISed to take into account a transparency value, and you could only apply it to a brush that was liquid. Quake 2 supports transparency whether you have a 3D card or not, but of course it looks much better hardware accelerated. Destructibility simply means a brush has hit points like a character, and if it takes damage exceeding its hit points it crumbles. These two effects combined means we now have 'real' glass, and walls that can be destroyed by rocket blasts. (SEE 2, 3, 3.1, 4, 4.1)



LIGHTING

The way lighting is calculated in the two games is entirely different, thanks in part to a more logical way of calculating lighting and the addition of coloured light. In Quake, white light could only be emitted



ted from an entity and lit up an object based on line of sight and the distance from the light source. Light could not be reflected, only absorbed. In Quake 2, light is emitted from surfaces and is both absorbed by other surfaces and reflected by them, depending on the texture of the surface. This means some objects will reflect more light than they absorb, being 'glossy' while others will absorb more, being 'matt'. In addition to this, we have coloured



lighting that can actually change the colour of a texture as it would in real life - blue light on a red surface would make it look purple, for instance.

(SEE 5 & 5.1)

SOUND

All sounds in Quake were sampled at 11KHz, meaning they don't sound the best when pumped through a modern sound card and speakers. Quake 2's sound effects are sampled at

22KHz, meaning crisper sounds for those with the machine specs to handle it. Other than that, there is not a huge improvement in the audio department. A couple of nice to haves would have been radiant sound, where the sound bounces off surfaces depending on their texture much like the lighting in Quake 2, and different sound properties depending upon the medium you're in - after all, things do sound a little different underwater.



IDIOT BOX

the simple
version for
simple folk

3D ENGINE: The way the PC draws and renders 3D objects in real time and changes said objects depending upon the player's orientation to make it look like a 'virtual world'.

BRUSH: 3D term meaning the area contained within the intersection of six planes.

DLL: Dynamic Linked Library. A file containing functions that an executable (.exe) refers to.

ENTITY: An object in Quake that does something special, like a door, player start point etc. Some entities can be bound to brushes.

RADIOSITY: The process of calculating the way light affects an object by calculating things such as reflective properties, angle of incidence, distance, luminosity etc.

TEXTURE MAPPING: The process of placing a bitmap onto a polygon to give it a 'surface' other than a standard colour.

VIS: A program that optimises a Quake level after creation. It determines what brushes would be visible from a particular location, and does not calculate any brushed that are not visible, thus greatly reducing the amount of surfaces rendered.

CODE

Quake 2 is written in C++, but that's nothing new in the gaming world. Combine this with Quake's 'open' nature, where the source for most of the monsters, weapons, graphics etc is made readily available, and you have a very powerful combination. With Quake, people who wanted to modify aspects of the game had to learn QuakeC, a language similar to C, which was limited in some respects. C++ on the other hand, does not have these limitations and when you combine this with no learning curve for designers it means faster and better mods will be available. The drawback is an issue of security - having executables do anything they want to your system means someone could easily plant a virus in a DLL and pass it off as a 'mod'. There is currently no way to prevent this, but Open Quake (<http://www.open-quake.org>) are going to some lengths to prevent this from happening by 'certifying' any new mods, which is a great idea.

I hope all the above has shed some light on this topic, and convinced the doubting few that Quake 2 is a programming masterpiece and an excellent gaming experience to boot. This article is intended to touch on a few technical aspects of Quake 2, but if you really want to get stuck into the juicy bits check out <http://www.inside3d.com> and <http://www.quake2.com/dll>.

HOW TO MAKE HOT CHIPS

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL PLAY

GARRY WALLIS

The silicon chip is one of those inventions that have changed the modern world. Every component in your computer system has at least one, usually more. So what exactly are these devices that give our games such life? What are they made from and how are they made?

Current processor manufacturing techniques have become massive feats in engineering, requiring clean rooms that are thousands of times cleaner than an hospital operating room! The actual silicon wafer must never be touched by human hands, so employees must wear protective suits when creating chips. IBM's recent announcement that they have successfully created a silicon chip that uses a new processor manufacturing technique is a great example of the advancements that have been made in recent years. This manufacturing technique is based on the use of copper instead of aluminium in the manufacturing process of a silicon chip. To understand the benefits of using copper instead of aluminium in the fabrication process, I will explain the actual process that is used to manufacture a typical processor today.

BUILD ME A CHIP AS SMALL AS CAN BE

The most important ingredient of a processor fabrication process has to be silicon, very pure silicon to be precise. Sand is used as a base for attaining this silicon, which is passed through many purification processes until it gets to around 99.999999 percent pure. This

is no easy feat, let me tell you. Once the silicon is this pure it can then be moulded into ingots where it is sliced very thinly to produce a silicon wafer, only around 2-3 mm thick. After the silicon wafer is created, a thin layer of silicon dioxide can be grown on the silicon, which acts as an insulating material for where the actual minute transistors and pathways will be built.

THE LIGHT SHINES THROUGH

Once the silicon wafer is ready, the actual detail of the chip can then be engraved into the layer of silicon dioxide that was grown using a technique which is not unfamiliar to the printing industry,

alone. Once these pathways and features have been etched into the silicon dioxide, the complex process of building the conductive pathways and placing the transistors can take place. The actual individual transistors of the chip need to be built by imbedding special ionised atoms, called dopants, into the space etched out. Doing this creates regions of negative and positive states within the etched areas on the silicon dioxide layer, and will eventually become a transistor or gate.

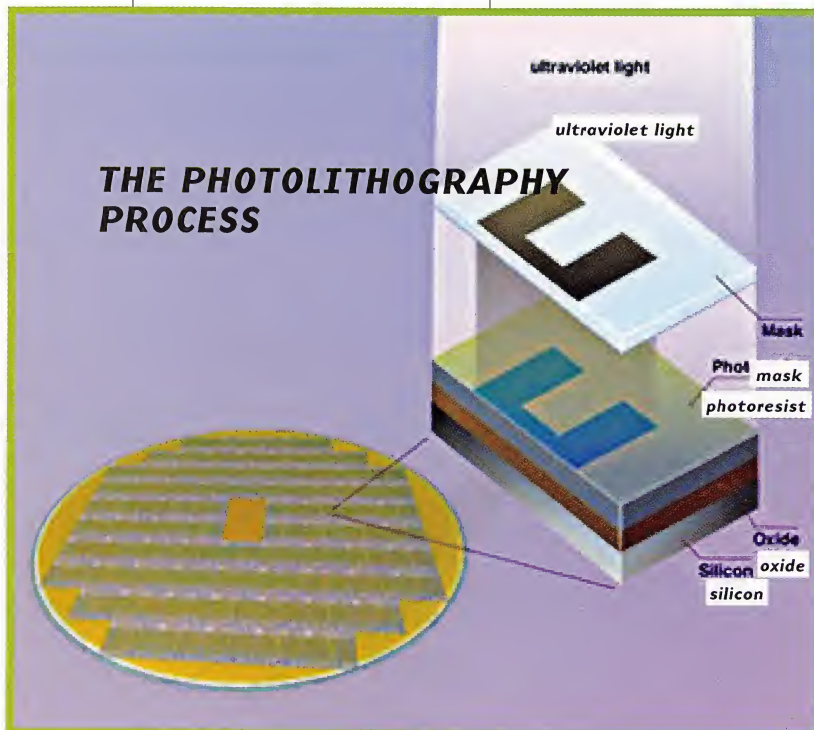
NEEDS TO BE A LOT SMALLER THAN THAT...

Ultraviolet light based photolithography has its limits though, and will probably have to be phased out when processors hit the photolithography barrier. This is when new techniques will be needed to take the size down to well below 0.18-micron sizes. X-ray lithography is one technique that will allow very small feature sizes down to as small as 0.15-microns or less.

Other technologies are being worked on as I write that will effectively cut the fabrication size down to a minuscule 0.05 microns. The amount of transistors that could be crammed on a processor that is 0.05 microns is scary, making for very awesome games indeed. Although there is still a lot of shrinking that can be done, there is a final barrier, so to speak. This is when the actual size of the features on the silicon are created that are only one atom thick. Obviously you can't go smaller than a single atom in size, can you? Well maybe, but it is known that sub atomic particles have a tendency not to care very much for the known laws of physics, and can act very unpredictably. At present we still have no way of creating such a fabrication process and it is still unknown what will happen to the electrical properties of pathways that are only a single atom thick - let alone sub atomic. A chip with features this small may conform to the laws of physics and conduct electricity properly,



called Photolithography. Photolithography involves using a thin layer of substance called photoresist that is applied on to the silicon dioxide. Ultraviolet light is then projected through a glass mask that has the chips' pattern etched into it, this pattern has to be perfect to etch into a silicon wafer with sizes as small as 0.25 of a micron. The silicon wafer is then washed in a solvent bath that causes the exposed areas of the silicon dioxide to be eaten away and the unexposed areas are left



**PICTURE OF IBM
CMOS7S CHIP MAG-
NIFIED HEAPS AND
HEAPS OF TIMES.**

or they may behave very strangely, Well I'm sure we will find out one day.

**ALUMINIUM OR
COPPER?**

Now we have our silicon wafer, with its multiple layers of silicon dioxide and our transistors built, we can add the actual pathways that are needed to connect all the millions of transistors. All processors on the market at the time of writing this article are using aluminium for these critical pathways.

COPPER, PLEASE

These pathways have always been made with aluminium because the use of other metals would cause contamination of the silicon, effectively making the chip useless. But on September the 22nd of last year IBM released a statement that they have discovered a way to create chips with copper instead of aluminium. As you may know, copper is a lot better at conducting electricity than aluminium is. This allows for the electrons to travel faster to their destinations, thus speeding the overall performance of the chip. The use of aluminium is another reason why chip fabrication processes cannot go below a certain size, as aluminium has a tendency to lose its conductive properties at small feature sizes. This effectively means the propagation of electricity happens at a slower speed, reducing the chips overall performance. Copper doesn't have these problems, thus very small features can be produced that couldn't possibly

be achieved with aluminium. A whopping 150 - 200 million transistors can be packed onto a chip with the use of IBM's new copper fabrication process called CMOS 7S. The record for the largest transistor count for a x86-based processor is held by AMD with their K6 processor, which at 8.8 million transistors seems puny in comparison. The fabrication process known as CMOS 7S overcomes past problems by utilising a special protective layer that is applied to the silicon dioxide before the copper is added, stopping the copper bleeding into it and ruining the chip.

CRANKING UP THE CLOCK RATE

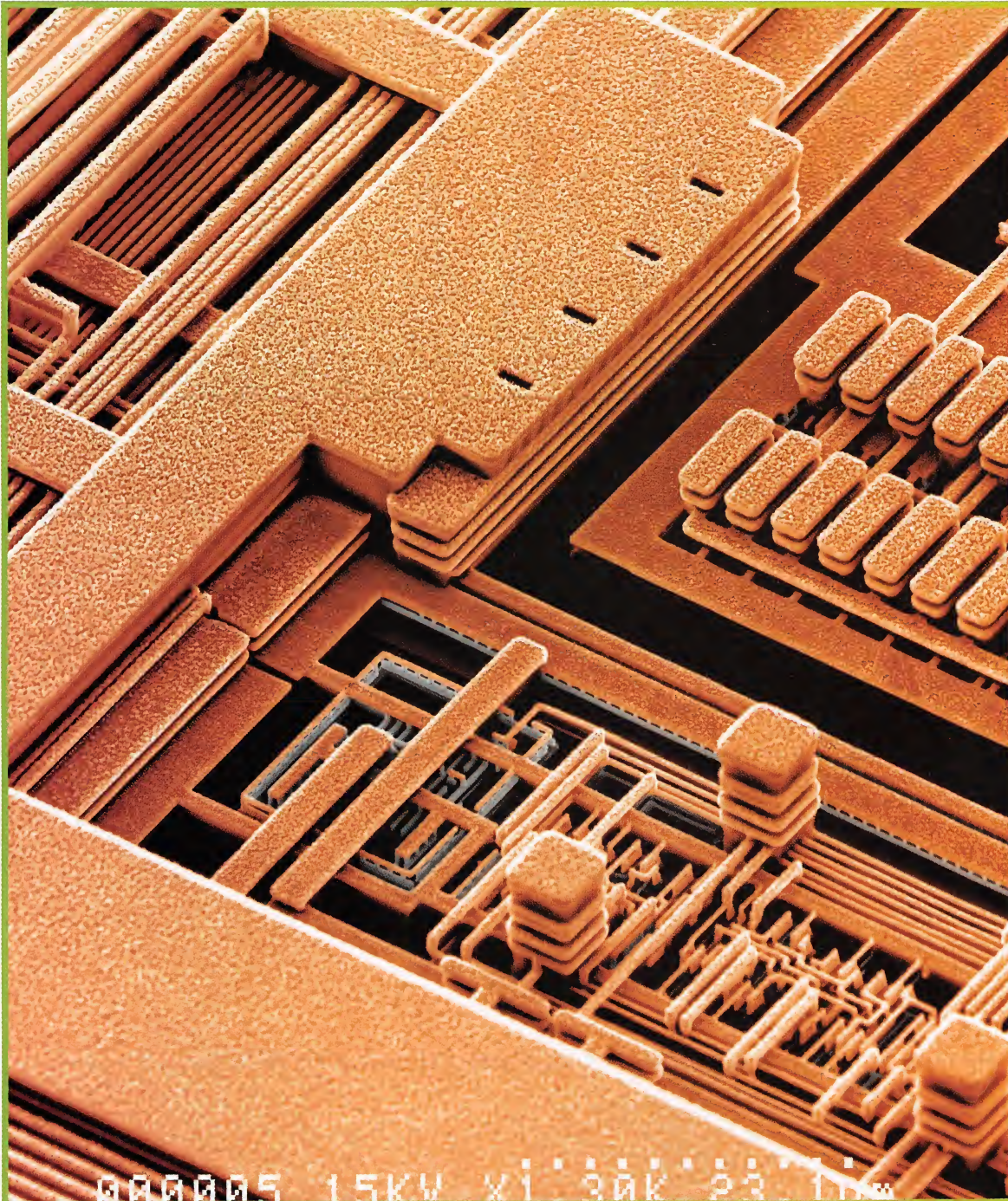
It is known that the faster the transistors, or gates, can switch,

the faster the chip can run. Silicon certainly is no slouch when it comes to switching speeds, but is there faster? There are a couple of interesting ones, gallium arsenide and silicon germanium to be precise. Both of these offer faster switching rates than plain silicon. Chips made from these substances could crank processor clock speeds up to an amazing 1GHz!

Imagine a 3D processor that is capable of running at 1GHz, games would have photo realistic 3D environments that behave with perfect physics models. Current 3D processor are not even close to those sort of speeds. A 3Dfx Voodoo chip runs at only 57MHz.

INTO THE FUTURE

Whichever way you look at it, gamers are in for a real treat as we head into the next century. All manner of computer chips will become smaller and faster. Scientists are even contemplating using the same Quantum effects that may stop silicon chips getting smaller to perform massive computations simultaneously, trillions of operations performed in parallel! Until these become mass-market products, we will use silicon and the lithography process to create faster and faster chips. So listen up whitecoats, keep increasing chip performance and keep those cool games which use these chips coming!



QUAKE III

PLAYGUIDE

QUAKE 2 IS A PHENOMENAL GAME, THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. IT'S MUCH MORE TO QUAKE THAN DOOM 2 WAS TO DOOM, BASICALLY EVERYTHING IS NEW, NEW MONSTERS, NEW WEAPONS AND NEW ENVIRONMENTS TO ENCOUNTER. SOUND DAUNTING? FEAR NOT SOLDIER, HERE IS THE PC POWERPLAY QUAKE 2 PLAYGUIDE.

THE BASICS OF PLAY:

While Quake 2 is a very different game to Quake, the engine it runs on is very similar, and therefore controlling your marine will be quite easy for those who played a lot of Quake. Because the engine is almost identical, the same principles apply when controlling your marine, the main one being that if you don't use mouse you're toast. Sure you'll probably be able to finish the Easy skill by using the keyboard, but you'll never survive long in a deathmatch. Playing Quake 2 well is about becoming one with the environment and the only way to do that is to use your mouse. There are simply moves you cannot do with a keyboard, ever tried circle strafing with a keyboard? Didn't think so. Control is everything, if you are not in control then there is no point in playing at all, you know you are a good player when you think about doing something and you've automatically done it before you have time to think about what keys to press. It's like walking, do you ever think about how to walk? No you just do it, it's the same with Quake 2, you must become fully immersed.

SINGLE PLAYER

The single player Quake 2 experience is far greater than in Quake. Whilst not being overly hard, it will throw up quite a few challenges on the way and is definitely less linear. The Unit system of levels may not please some people, but there is a lot less wandering around that in games like Hexen and the puzzles aren't as hard either.

There are really two styles of play and both work with varying degrees of success in different situation. The two styles being the "charge in and blow up everything before they even notice you're there" style and the "take 'em out one by one as silent as possible" one. As I said, each works well in some places and it's good to know how to do both effectively. It's

BY ROD CAMPBELL

also important to remember that monster take more damage if they don't know you're coming, so less ammo is required if you're using stealthy tactics.

You should look at your field computer regularly, along with containing kill and secret stats it also has what your primary and secondary objectives are. Obviously it's a good idea to keep to these but don't worry if you go off track a bit because Quake 2 has stacks of secrets just waiting to be found, included in these are three secret levels. We could tell you all the secrets here and now but that would fill up a sizeable chunk of this magazine and it would also take away a lot of the fun of Quake 2, some of them are devilishly hard to find and a great sense of achievement can be attained when you find them all, that said we will tell you where to find the secret levels.

DEATHMATCH TACTICS

Everyone knows that the single player game is just a warm up to the real thing. There are however several differences in the way you should play the two. The first one being ammo conservation. Conserving ammo in a Deathmatch is pointless. Ammo respawns fairly quickly and if you have 300 cells you should be shooting even where you think someone might be hiding. Remember you get whatever the person had when he/she dies and you may as well be high on frags and low on ammo than dead all the time.

Weapon choice is also very different, in single player you use the weapon that will only just accomplish the task at hand. In Deathmatch overkill is the only way to go. You use the biggest weapon you have all of the time. Even if you know a person has just respawned, you hit them with that BFG. Reasons for this are that if you keep killing, you win the game. If you keep killing you will stay high on ammo and can thus do more killing. And if you can intimidate someone then you will probably be able to whip them for the entirety of the match. Why? Because if they think you have a big weapon and are good at using it they will be far less likely to fire on you or will at least hesitate.



Because there is no way of knowing what weapon a person is holding before they fire it, you will have a significant advantage over this player. Firstly because if you don't have a big weapon at some time or another, they will more likely let you pass, and secondly because when you do engage them you will almost certainly get the first shot in every time due to their hesitation. Special moves like Rocket Jumps are definitely handy for getting out of trouble, as well as wowing your opponents. One very important thing people forget is that mind games contribute

Sample mouse control system

Always choose a control system which is best for you, some work better for some people than others, there are many and varied systems so try them all out. Here is a standard mouse control system which will work for just about anyone who takes the time to practise.

- Set Freelook to ON
- Set Always Run to ON
- Set Attack to Left Mouse Button
- Set Change Weapon to Right Mouse button
- Set Walk Forward to Y
- Set Walk Backwards to H
- Set Step Left to G
- Set Step Right to J
- Set Crouch to U

a considerable part to your success. If you know that you have the upper hand a few well placed words can most definitely throw another player off their game completely. If you can make someone fire willy nilly in a fit of rage then you have done a good job, but remember, there is a very fine line between efficient sledging and bragging. Never brag, you will lose a lot of friends and opponents, and you will ultimately have less fun. Also remember that actions speak, much, much louder than words.

EXTRA CHUNKY MANOEUVRES

You want to be the best right? Sick of being the underdog because you just can't handle the pace? Read on.

Playing in a Deathmatch situation requires intimate knowledge of each level and the secrets therein. Obviously you're not going to perform all that well if everyone else knows where the quad is except for you. You need to know where all the weapons are and immediately know where you have respawned so you can find some hardware quickly. Always stay on the move, jumping is good to get out of the way but crouching is bad. Never crouch unless you have to go through a low passage, because you can't move as fast and even if someone fires a rocket at you while crouching, chances are you'll be killed by the splash damage of the rocket hitting the ground - even if it doesn't hit you. Learning to rocket jump is essential, although it takes practise to survive after a couple. Many people think you jump and fire at the same time, this is not the case. You will go higher and sustain less damage if you jump and fire at the top of your arc. It takes time to master, but when you can reverse rocket jump over someone's head and waste them before they know what's happening the you'll realise it's worthwhile. Rocket jumps can create shortcuts too, as well as getting you to places which are normally inaccessible, and are an essential technique for anyone who is into sniping. Sniping is not camping. Camping is standing near a powerful weapon and pasting anyone who comes near it. Sniping however does not involve standing near weapons and unlike camping, is perfectly acceptable. If you can get to a cool position, use it to your advantage - never camp though! One of the best tactics from Quake was to get the Pentagram, head into the water with your thunderbolt and discharge, killing stacks of people in one go. Sadly no such tactic is available in Quake 2, but the use of items is just as important. Generally the server will use the option where you use the item when you pick it up (unlike single player's inventory system). Quad damage is always handy, and probably the best weapon to use while Quadded is the Super Shotgun. Large area effect with maximum damage. Don't bother with Quad Railgun as one shot will kill most people anyway and its area effect is perilously small. The Silencer is a good multiplayer tool for those who have stealth tactics in mind and obviously the Invulnerability will help anyone. So there you have it. Don't camp, don't brag and you'll have a great time. Happy Fragging!

TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

Quake's weapons weren't really all that fantastic, anyone would admit that. Quake 2 however has a much more varied weapon selection, often making it hard to decide on which weapon to use in each situation, all have strengths and weaknesses, here they are in full.

BLASTER: (AMMO NONE)

Your initial weapon, quite weak but it still has uses and is a hell of a lot better than an axe. Guards usually fall to Blaster fire easily and it's great for setting off shootable switches and lighting the way in dark areas. You can gib already fallen foes with the blaster for reasons already stated.

SHOTGUN: (Ammo 1 shell per shot)

Your stock standard weapon for the initial stages, good for taking down slightly bigger foes such as the Enforcers, it has a relatively small spread so isn't too bad for taking out enemies over long distances.

SUPER SHOTGUN: (Ammo 2 shells per shot)

The general all purpose weapon, although it has a slow firing rate it's very powerful and there is usually plenty of shells around to fuel your ammo needs, most Stroggs fall in three shots.

MACHINE GUN: (ammo 1 bullet per shot)

Not a great weapon, due to the fact that it is very light the recoil makes it impossible to aim for extended periods of time, good for guards and taking pot shots.

CHAINGUN: (Ammo 9 bullets per shot)

It cuts down foes very fast but takes considerable skill not to waste your entire ammo supply. If you press the trigger once 9 bullets will be let off, not good for unsustained fire, you may as well just hold the trigger down. There is also spin up and spin down delay, meaning you could get killed easily waiting for your weapon to warm up, it will also continue firing after you let off the trigger, so let it off just before you know the Strogg in your sights is about to croak it, thus not wasting precious ammo for nothing.

GRENADES/GRENADE LAUNCHER: (Ammo 1 grenade per shot/throw)

This grenade launcher works similar to that of Quake, except it fires the grenades farther and they bounce more too. For the first few tries you'll find you're firing over the heads of your enemies, it won't take long to get used to the new system though, you can also throw grenades if you are lacking a launcher, the obviously don't go as far though.

ROCKET LAUNCHER: (1 rocket per shot)

The old favourite and still devastating. The rockets move slower so it isn't as useful in Deathmatch anymore, but still rules in single player. Watch those Stroggs fly!

HYPER BLASTER: (1 cell per shot)

It acts like a chaingun but has no spin up delay. This is a high power high firing rate weapon and is very useful. It does have a spin down delay though.

RAILGUN: (Ammo 1 Slug per shot)

A slightly deceptive weapon in that the projectile moves VERY fast (almost instantaneously) and the trails move much slower. It also continues fully intact after hitting the opponent, making you sometimes

think you've missed them all together, rest assured if they are in your crosshairs when you press the trigger they are feeling a lot of pain. Slow firing rate but well worth the wait.

BFG 10K: (Ammo 50 Cells per shot)

You'll have to figure out the Acronym for yourself, but this is the big one. Great for clearing areas in one go, especially about ten pesky flyers. Like Doom it only really needs to be pulled out a few times during the whole game, needless to say, this weapon is made for cross fire battles in Deathmatch.

THE BEASTIE BOYS

LIGHT GUARD: You probably won't have to shoot twice, their blaster is only useful for repelling mosquitoes.

SHOTGUN

GUARD: As the name implies these boys carry a shotty. While it hurts a bit they won't last long enough to do much damage.

MACHINE GUN

GUARD: If there is a few of them around they can be dangerous because they are pretty accurate. Still very easy to kill though.

ENFORCER:

Quite strong, takes four shotgun shells to fell although he won't last against Machine gun or Chaingun fire. His Chaingun is fairly powerful and he uses it as a club in close quarters. Also watch for the spray he gives out when his head gets blown off.

GUNNER: The first real enemy. A bit stronger than the Enforcer and equipped with two weapons. His machine gun isn't too nasty but his Automatic Grenade Launcher is. They bounce around everywhere and are a real pain in enclosed areas. Good at ducking rockets too, but this leaves them open.

BERSERKER: No ranged weapons but very fast and good at taking chunks out of unwary marines with his hammer and spike. Often placed in areas where he may fling you over then edge of a cliff with one swipe. Pick him off from a distance or engage up close with the Super Shotgun.

IRON MAIDEN: The Fighting Femme of the Strogg Army is not to be taken lightly. Touting a Rocket Launcher and nasty claws she should be taken out early before she does any real damage, as strong as the Gunner as well.

GLADIATOR: Big, strong and slow, but if he targets you with that Railgun you're meat. Give him some of his own back and show him how much a Depleted Uranium Slug to the head can actually hurt. Keep at mid distance so he can't decide whether to use his vice or the Railgun.

PARASITE:

Small but tough enough to be a real pain. They use a life sucking probe which attaches itself to you and won't let go without the use of some firepower in its general direction.

MEDIC: Like the Arch Vile from Doom 2 this monstrosity

has the ability to heal other non gibbed enemies. You can stop this by pumping a blaster shot or two into your foes as you kill them to make a few extra chunks which the

medic can't heal. Unlike the Arch Vile his weapon is only a Blaster.

BRAINS: Very weak but has an energy shield which covers him from frontal attacks, get behind him and take him apart with just about anything, also watch for the tentacles protruding from his chest.

BARRACUDA

SHARK: Nastier than the Rottfish, but not by much.

TECHNICIAN: Slow hovering tin can. Can take

quite a bit of punishment but doesn't dish out too much unless you get close and it uses its shocking prod, perfect for target practise.

MUTANT:

Why did they put this in? Because everyone loved the Fiend from Quake. Essentially the Fiend with a new paint job, just as psycho.

FLYER: Small flying cyborg, quick mover and they mostly come in packs.

Sustained Blaster fire from several of them can cause a lot of pain, but they generally go down with a couple of Shotgun shells spread around liberally.

ICARUS: About as dangerous as the flyer but much larger. It's stronger, but is much easier to hit as well.

TANK: Takes a hell of a lot of punishment, but isn't really that dangerous unless you're standing in front of him when his Triple Rocket Launcher goes off. This doesn't happen all that often though.

TANK COMMANDER:

Nothing extra special, a bit more heavily armoured than its predecessor.



THE BOSSES

THE SUPER TANK

This is actually a Tank in that it runs on tracks. The best way to take it down is to open fire with Quad powered Hyper Blaster and don't stop until it's in several pieces. It also has a Rocket Launcher so its best to move around a lot.



THE HOVER TANK

Stay away from walls, as even if the barrage of rockets misses you you can still get hurt from the splash damage cause by four rockets hitting a wall simultaneously. It's very slow and begs to be fried by your trusty Railgun, don't let it down.

MAKRON

One of the few times you'll need the Big Friendly Gun. Makron can take massive amounts of punishment and he too sports a BFG. If you're in the impact zone it's good-night, that's for certain. Also, if you are in direct line of sight of the impact zone and Makron himself you'll also get hurt to a lesser degree. Of course, once you've pounded him several times and you think he's dead up he pops again, smaller but just as deadly with Railguns blazing, return the favour once your BFG runs out. Keep plenty of Quads handy.

The Id Gallery

Remember John Romero's head from Doom2? Well this time they've gone one better with everyone getting in there. After you kill Makron press one of the floor switches and head down the opposite ramp. Follow the passage until you come to an intersection and blow up the partly broken wall in front of you. There you have it, play to your heart's content. Also hidden in this area is the "real" Strogg leader but you'll have to find that one yourselves.



SECRET LEVELS

1. The Lost Station.

Anyone who played the Test Demo and knew where the Rocket Launcher was will find this one. Located on the third level (Comm Centre), all you have to do is jump into the pool near the start with the steps rising out of it. You can use the Rebreather but it isn't essential. Head away from the steps through the water to a winding passage, use the Blaster to light the way. Once at the end, surface (note there is no longer a Rocket Launcher here) and head over to the lift to enter the Lost Station where the objective is to "Find a Powerful Weapon".

2. Sudden Death.

In the Receiving Centre head for the part which is initially blocked with red lasers. you come to a balcony overlooking a shal-



low pool with a water fall at one end. You have to jump up over the waterfall, which isn't that hard, it may take a couple of goes or maybe a rocket jump if you're inept. Anyway, when you make it over the top you're off to "Sudden Death" which is a bonus type level with no monsters.

3. Comm Satellite

After destroying the Big Gun on the very next level, drop down the lift shaft to the left right at the start. Head over to the fan in the water and blow out the fuse to stop the fan before jumping out and back into the small hole. Follow your nose along the tunnel and shortly you'll be whisked away to the "Comm Satellite"



QUAKE II

CREATOR'S PARADISE

Rod "Spoonman" Campbell

Id Software have always had a different approach to most software companies, in that they allowed other parties to basically do what ever they want with the game. There were countless Doom CDs chock full of levels and patches, and when Quake hit the net there was a wave of new stuff within mere days of the test beta release (check the hallowed pages of PowerPlay #1 for details). All in all there would probably be over a million Quake levels out there and there are thousands of other patches. Those who felt extra adventurous did a Total Conversion and the Quake engine saw many different perspectives over the last year and a half.

The more things change...

Now we have Quake 2, and do you think things have changed? Of course they haven't. Even though there has been a bit of a changing of the guard at Id over the last couple of years they have still made it incredibly easy for people to add what ever they like to the game.

As with Quake, users can create their own skins - though it's more complicated this time

In fact, Quake 2 is even easier to work with than Quake, so we should see even more amateurs having a go, and thus have more patches and more lastability. Because Quake 2 is far more similar to Quake than Quake was to Doom (in a game engine sense) it has taken even less time for things to start appearing on the web. Editors such as Worldcraft and utilities such as Game Spy had Quake 2 support in no time, and thus soon the levels started coming. The very first level was very basic, it had four monsters and not much else, this probably wouldn't seem so amazing if it hadn't come out only a day after the initial release. Then the slow trickle became a stream, the stream is fast becoming a river and there is no doubt that this will turn into a flood in no time.

Although obviously no Total Conversions have appeared just yet, there is plenty on the drawing board and underway already. On many popular Quake 2 sites there is an increasing number of ads for talented artists and programmers. Quake has had quite a lot of good TC's - Team Fortress, Capture the Flag and Quake Rally are some of the best, but you can just feel that with Quake 2 things are just going to escalate that much more. There is money to be made out there for anyone with a bit of talent and time on their hands.

The more they stay the same

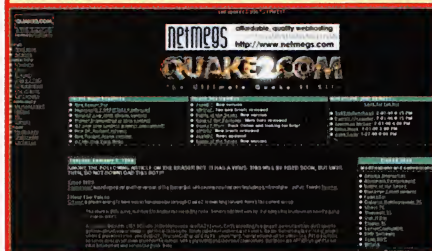
One disturbing factor about the Quake editing community is that many of the patches first released "fixed" many of Quake 2's aspects to be more like Quake. The rocket speed for instance, Id slowed the rockets down for Quake 2 so that the weapon would not be such an imposing force in Deathmatch

Where to get your Quake 2 fix

Quake2.com

<http://www.quake2.com>

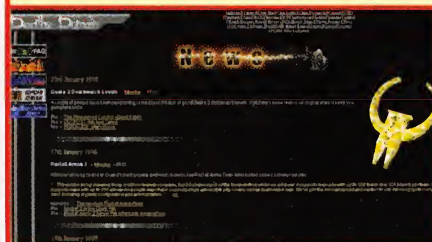
One of the best Quake 2 specific sites. Go here to get all the latest info and they host a ridiculous number of Quake 2 related sites to peruse. News is updated usually more than once daily and is always from reputable sources. Well set out and easy to read.



Death's Domain

<http://dd.networkx.net.au>

Looking for a Quake 2 server? Look no farther. Death's Domain has a complete list of Australian servers including how many people are on, what level is being played and most importantly, what sort of Ping you could expect. Tired of wandering from server to server with no one to blow away? Your problems are over.



What's on the CD?

Because we care, we've grabbed the best of everything that's been released so far and put it on the CD for your convenience. Unfortunately we couldn't get any levels due to copyright laws, but such is life, there is a lot of other cool stuff here though.

Files: qview50.zip qviewt45.zip Both files are needed to run a utility called Qview. Which is similar to Game Spy and helps to find servers in a hurry.

File: Gamespyinstaller150.exe The real thing, Gamespy is essential for anyone looking for a Quake killfest and now (obviously) it has Quake 2 support. This version is shareware but there is also an upgrade available on the Gamespy website for registered users.

File: q2source_12_11.zip The Quake 2 source code, also includes Id's own level editor, QE4. Its not recommended that you play around with this unless you know what you're doing.

File: pmodels_12_12.zip A file to help all those budding modellers along their way.

File: Winqoole230beta4.exe (Quake Object Oriented Level Editor) Still in Beta stages but very good, there is also a GL version for anyone who can support it on the Qoole website.

File: qnmver095full.zip: The shareware version of Quake Name Maker with Quake2 support, make your own spiffy Names, Animated names and Macros.

File: patch_o8.zip MUST HAVE interim patch which fixes up a lot of bugs. This is not a point release and we'll most likely have that for you next issue but it goes a long way to helping Quake 2 run as it should.

Other Patches: Check readme files for info.

File: Q2turret.zip

File: Q2flog01.zip

File: ballz.zip

Fancy your skills in creating new levels? Well, there's plenty of level editors out there - and on our CD

games. So what does some guy do? Speed 'em back up again. The same has happened for many other facets of the gameplay. While perfectly legal, it kind of puts a dampener on why Quake 2 was made in the first place, the whole new Multiplayer scheme is being destroyed by people who couldn't be bothered learning a new game. People who can't handle the fact that the Rocket Launcher should have equals. What I want to know is, if they want Quake 2 to be Quake, why don't they just play Quake? Or is that just a little bit too logical?

Aside from this, there are some really cool new weapon patches appearing, like flamethrowers and the ultra cool Rail Grenade. Probably the coolest patch developed so far would have to be Ridah's Rocket Turret patch. Remember the Rocket Turret in the first Jail level? Wonder why there was a massive destructive beast and you couldn't use it? Well now you can. This would rule in a game of CTF. Having levels with rocket turrets as

Sentries would have to be the best fun ever, the scope is limitless. There will obviously be Quake 2 bots, but the only ones which have appeared thus far are fairly buggy Beta versions, this situation will improve.

A forever game

Quake 2's long term value has been assured even only a few weeks after its release. There are enough hacks turned editor out there to sink the proverbial ship and the rate of people having a dabble is increasing every day. How long will Quake 2 last? Well let's just say that if you played every single level, used every patch, made your own levels, played every TC you would be very old by the time you had finished. You would also die very happy.

GAMES GAMES GLORIOUS GAMES!

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick st.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

WHEN YOU WRITE, REMEMBER TO INCLUDE AS MUCH PERTINENT INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. SEND YOUR CONFIG.SYS AND AUTOEXEC.BAT AND ANY ASSOCIATED *.INI FILES FOR WINDOWS THAT MIGHT TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM. GIVE ME AS DETAILED AN EXPLANATION AS YOU CAN AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE ABOUT YOUR PC. FEEL FREE TO EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS OR, IF YOU WANT TO SNAIL MAIL, PLEASE REMEMBER TO WRITE CLEARLY OR BETTER STILL, PRINT YOUR LETTERS. PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE VOLUME OF MESSAGES WE RECEIVE, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE A RESPONSE TO YOUR QUERIES.

HARD DRIVE HASSLES

>q I have a problem with my hard drive. Right in the middle of a game, after everything is loaded, my hard drive decides to have a very hard, very long think! This has gotten to the stage where it's becoming a pain in the arse. What the hell is it doing? My hard drive is a Seagate 1.08 gig.

Hope you can help,

DJ Jeff

Internet

>a A number of things could cause your hard drive to thrash, but the most

likely cause is that Windows is swapping out to its virtual memory in a big way. How much RAM do you have installed? And how old is your hard drive?

A standard Windows install will create a minimal swap file that is 'resizable'. While this means you save disk space because the swap file isn't unnecessarily large, re-sizing the swapfile is a very disk intensive process. You can solve this problem by forcing the size of the swapfile to something useful AND make it static (stop it from growing).

No matter how much RAM you have, a good swap file size, especially for low RAM machines, is 32M. To force windows to create and use a swapfile of 32M click Start -> Settings -> Control Panel -> System -> Performance -> Virtual Memory. Then click 'Let me specify my own virtual memory settings' and choose a drive where you want the swapfile to go. Then force a minimum and maximum size of 32M.

DISABLING VIDEO

>q I have an Acer Aspire computer that I bought over a year ago. Acer designed the motherboard with the video card on the motherboard i.e. hardwired to the board. The video card is a Cirrus Logic 5434 with 2 meg of RAM. I am now thinking of replacing this card with a normal PCI variant, something like a Rendition based processor type or the Matrox Millennium. My question is this, if I install the new card in my PCI slot will I need to somehow disable the old Cirrus Logic one? If I have to do the above, would you

know how it's done. I have looked in the motherboard's manual but there's pretty little information on the video card. I am writing this because I have read in the Rendition card manual that one has to disable video cards that are hardwired to the motherboard before installing their card. My motherboard is made by Acer and is designated as the V12LC. Any information will be useful.

Stan

VIC

>a Hardwired video cards are never a good idea — and your problem is a prime example of why. Proprietary motherboard manufacturers that hardwire major components to the motherboard automatically limit your upgrade choices in the future.

In this situation you can and need to disable the onboard video. The jumpers to do so should be in your motherboard manual. Look for a page outlining all the jumpers on the motherboard and what each is used for. It's likely to be called 'VGA disable' or 'Video disable'.

If you can't find the jumper in the manual or on the motherboard your only option is to contact Acer and have them look up what jumper you need to change. You won't be able to use any other video card in your machine until the onboard video is disabled.

PROBLEM PROGRAMS

>q I am having a hell of a time trying to remove a program from my PC. The program is called WinHack. I got the program from one of the cover CD's from your magazine. Whenever Windows 95 loads up, it comes up with a message saying the it could not find the program file needed. I deleted it once and it said it so I re-installed it and the error still appears. I have also tried to use the Add/Remove function in Control Panel and that doesn't work either. PLEASE HELP, I value my sanity!!!

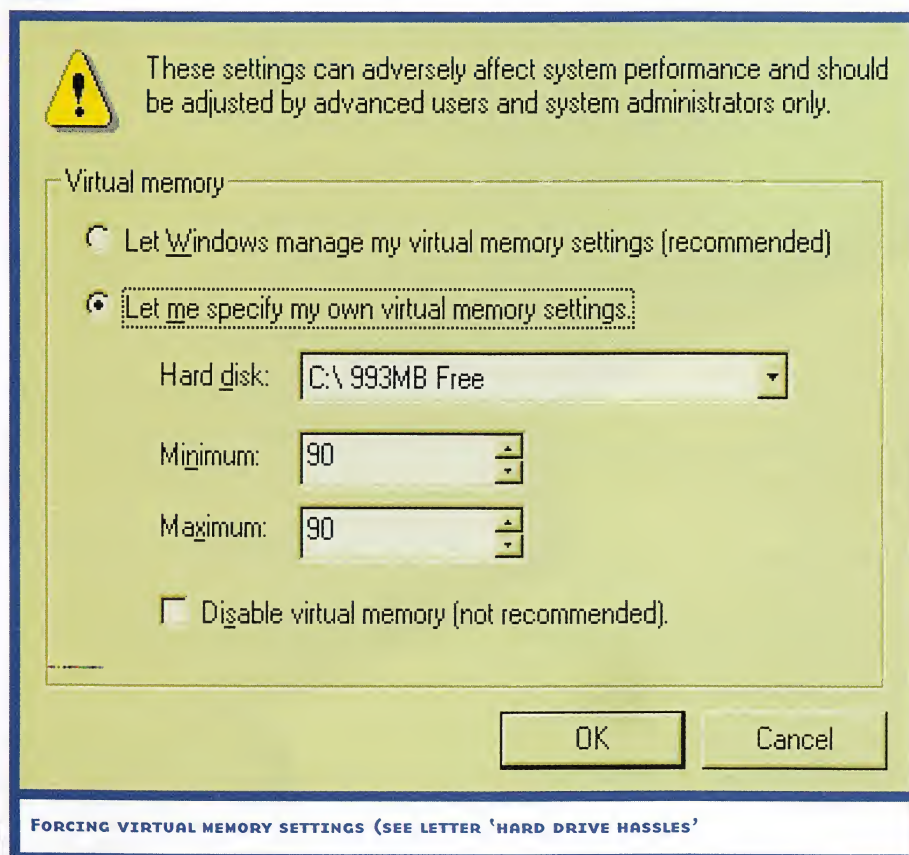
Broods

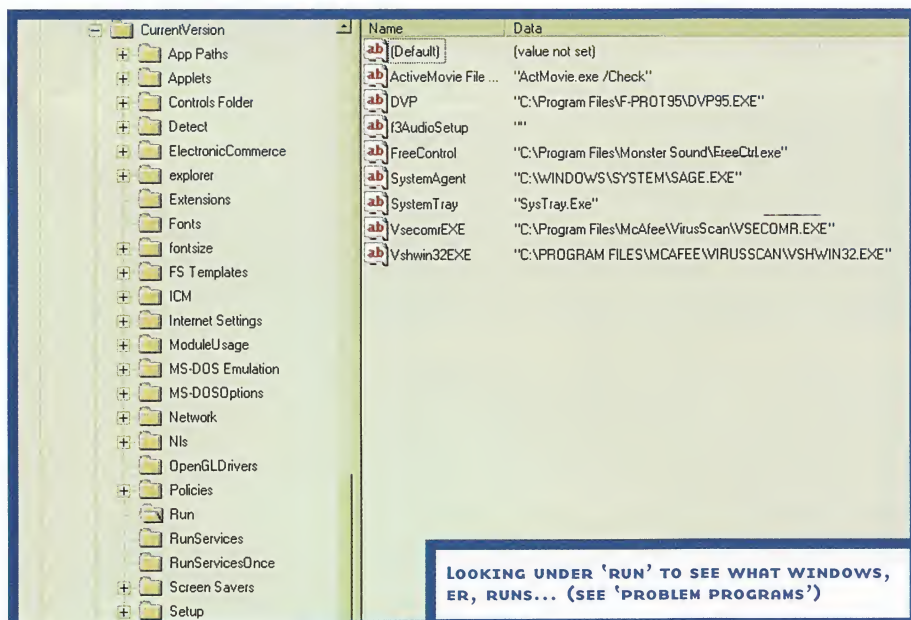
Internet

>a Getting rid of problem apps can take a number of steps. The following generally applies to any application that doesn't cleanly uninstall itself.

Firstly click on the applications icon and select Properties. Find out where the shortcut is pointing to. This should be where the program resides. Open up Explorer and find the directory on your drive. Right click on it and select 'Delete'. Say 'Yes' to any warnings about deleting important files. Then, just delete the program icon from your desktop or Start menu. Check and make sure there's no shortcuts in your Startup directory on your Start menu, for some programs try to automatically load themselves at runtime.

Now if after all this you reboot and still find Windows trying to execute a program that no longer exists and doesn't appear





in your Startup folder you'll need to run REGEDIT and click on down to the following key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run

Here you'll find a list of programs, most of which DO need to run each time you boot up, and one of them may be the culprit program. Just delete it and save the registry. Don't delete anything you're unsure about, or you may just cause more problems.

INTERNET PEER?

>q I have two friends who live nearby and who all have modems. We are tired of just playing Total Annihilation with two people and we have 4 computers between us. We all live in Melbourne and want to network our computers. Is there any way we could make a peer to peer network over the phonelines or some other way? It's bloody annoying to not experience TA as it should be. Being a TA worshiper surely you could see how we are suffering. Please help me.

Simon
Internet

>a I hear you brother! All hail TA, the game of kings!

There isn't any way (currently) of establishing a peer-to-peer network over the Internet with standard LAN protocols, at least in Windows. Some poor sod would have to write a program to translate IPX packets to TCP/IP and it just isn't worth the effort — that's why Cavedog included a 'play over TCP/IP' option in TA. Why aren't you using that? The option is meant to support a maximum of four players over the Internet, though so far my TA buddies and I (gratuitous mention of one Peter Sharpe here — got you again Pete!) have managed a six player game over the Internet without too much trouble.

In case you're wondering when you play TA over the Internet you all connect directly to each other, with one machine acting as host. You don't need to join or use a gaming mechanism like Mplayer or TEN (though you can). All you need to know is your friends' IP address, which they can find out by running WINIPCFG once connected. Then they can just email or ICQ you the IP address.

Take note that it is actually possible to set up drive sharing over the Internet, just like on a LAN, but it's a big hassle and not particularly fast. And besides, this isn't the same thing as gaming. If your ISPs are too slow or you can't afford the bandwidth, go for the cheaper and MUCH faster method — lug your PC to your pals house and play over LAN. You get to gloat face to face, too.

MEMORY MISSING

>q Hi all you people at the greatest mag in the universe. I have a big problem. The other day I bought 2 16Mb modules and came straight home to install them. I did all the right things by wearing a static band. I installed all the RAM properly and started the computer. This is when the problem started. I got 3 loud beeps from the PC speaker and then nothing. I restarted the computer and nothing showed on the screen not even the CMOS. I tried all the things that it said in the Motherboard manual and nothing worked. Could you please tell me what the problem is.

Russell Proud
VIC

>a Beeps from your PC means your BIOS is trying to tell you that it can't start up because it's found a critical error — that is, an error so great that it can't boot up.

In this case three beeps means there's

something wrong with your RAM, and given you've just installed some more RAM I think it's safe to assume the BIOS has correctly pin-pointed the problem. What exactly is the problem? In your case the BIOS is likely to report an error if the RAM has been incorrectly inserted or not properly inserted. I'm ruling out the possibility of faulty RAM because I'm assuming the RAM you're installing is brand new.

The solution, then, is to make sure your RAM is installed properly. Firstly check to make sure it's sitting snugly in the slots and it's not loose. If the machine still won't boot make sure you've installed your new RAM in the first banks on the motherboard. I've got a feeling you've added the new RAM into the spare banks on your board, leaving the original where it is. Depending on how much you had originally, the BIOS can have problems identifying how much RAM you have unless the larger size SIMMs are installed first.

If, after switching the RAM around the machine still won't boot or it boots but displays a RAM count smaller than what you expected, remove the old RAM and just try booting the 32M you just bought. If that works then it's unlikely you'll be able to use your old and new RAM together.

GAMES VS RADIO

>q Hello, before I begin this letter I would like to congratulate the staff of PcPowerplay for publishing such a great magazine. The fact that it is Australian makes it even better. I have a problem with my computer. The problem being interference with the radio. My parents wish to listen to AM radio while I am playing on the computer, unfortunately the interference (buzzing noise) caused by the computer makes listening to the radio nearly impossible. Is there anything I can do? I have tried switching off the monitor but the interference still exists.

Gavin Jackson
NSW

>a Strap your parents in line son! How dare they listen to the radio while you play games? AM at that! No, games are much more important — make this clear to them, tell them it's essential to your development.

I've got to ask, how on Earth do you play games if you switch your monitor off? This itself is a sign that your gaming development is already being hindered by the radio, the antisocial device that it is. You've got to fix this and here's how:

MOVE THE RADIO AWAY.

That's it. Your PC is too big and clunky, and unless the radio was made before 1940, the radio is much easier to move. That's about the only way you'll reduce interference — just move the radio away from the computer until no more buzzing is heard.

DOUBTING DIRECTX?

>q I recently got DirectX 5.0 off one of your magazines and now I wish to delete it. I am doing this as I was told it can harm programs which require DirectX 3.0. My problem is that I don't know where the file is, so I can't delete it. I have tried searching for it under many names in the find command yet have failed to find it. Do you know what the file name for DirectX 5.0 is, or can you suggest a possible key word I can use to find it in the find option.

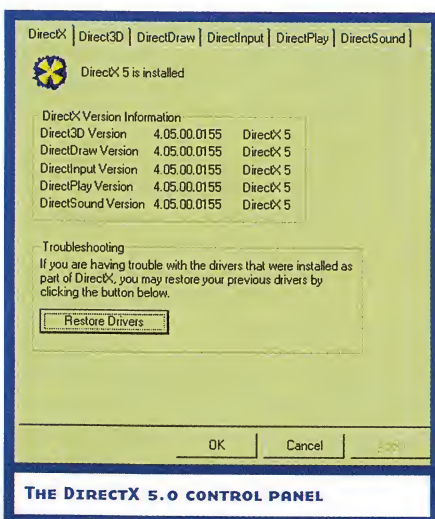
Raffan
Internet

>a Don't always believe what you're told — DirectX 5.0 cannot harm programs that need DirectX 3.0. DirectX 5.0 is completely backwards compatible with DirectX 3.0 and whoever told you that they aren't is seriously mis-informed.

Moreover, DirectX isn't a 'file'. It's a collection of many files to perform a variety of tasks from graphics manipulation to sound playback. There's no such thing as deleting DirectX, the only way you'll get rid of it is to un-install it using DirectX's un-install feature. Given that DirectX 5.0 is the latest version, and it's backward compatible with previous versions (and therefore supports ALL DirectX games) there's no need for you to remove it from your system.

IDENTITY CRISIS

>q I have a very annoying problem which I hope you can help me with. I have an ancient 486 computer, and it thinks that my 3.5 inch floppy disk drive is a 5.25 inch drive. I thought that it might be something in the BIOS thingy, but when I tried to get in there to fix it I realised that someone had changed the password without my knowing and now I can't get in. Win95 says that it's 5 1/4 inch drive and when I try to access it, it says "A: is not accessible. The device is not ready. Retry/Cancel". In Dos it says "Not ready



Random Access

Welcome to Random Access, a column dedicated to interesting, useful and informative tips about anything and everything to do with your PC. Be it hardware, software, DOS or Windows you'll find tips and tricks listed here every month. If you have some tips of your own you'd like to share with other gamers such as yourself feel free to send your tip into Setup and, if we publish it, we'll be sure to credit and print your name.

REGISTRY SCHMEGISTRY

So you've spent plenty of time rummaging around your registry typing in hacks, optimising performance, crashing your machine in new and bizarre ways... but what the heck does half that registry slang mean? Why can't they just use plain English to explain it all? Because that would make perfect sense, and that would be far too easy.

The registry is basically one huge config file. It stores settings and variables for everything from what your default browser should be to the background color of your favourite text editor.

Keeping track of all this info is done through vague and terribly un-helpful 'key' names stored in a hierarchial structure. So what do these names mean?

HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT — This is where all of your file types are stored (you know, those file extensions recognised by Windows and which may have an associated application). OLE information is also stored here.

HKEY_CURRENT_USER — This is where information regarding the current user is stored and points to HKEY_USERS.

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE — Not surprisingly this is where information about your machine's hardware and software is stored. Just as you can have multiple users so also you can have multiple machine configurations all of which are stored here.

HKEY_USERS — All of the machine's user information for all users is stored here. This is a bulky section like HEKY_LOCAL_MACHINE because software (all software) will stick its configuration and many other settings here.

HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG — Like HKEY_CURRENT_USER this points to the current machine configuration stored in HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE.

HKEY_DYN_DATA — Points to the part of HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE associated with Plug and Play features.

There, that cleared things up didn't it? No? Oh well hard cheese because there's not a lot more to say on the matter, really...

START SCHMART!

This tip comes from an Internet PCPowerPlay fan known only as 'Ben':

"I just noticed in PCPP #17 that you said that you can clean up your Start menu by going to Start->Settings->Taskbar, then click on advanced and delete unwanted shortcuts etc, but you can do this much more easily by right-clicking on the start button and click on Open. It then shows the start menu as a folder!!! From here you can do what you want and if you want your own pop-up menu for games (like I have!!), all you have to do is copy a pop-up file, paste it in the Start menu, delete all the stuff in it, rename it and then put all your new shortcuts in it !!!" Thanks for the tip Ben!

reading drive A: Abort, Retry, Fail?".

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Matthew Beattie

Internet

>a The only way to reset the BIOS password so you can get back in and change A: to a 3.5 inch is to reset it on your motherboard. All motherboards have a jumper which, if switched when the power is turned on, will restore the factory default. This means all passwords, performance options and so on will be reset. All you have to do

then is turn the power off, switch the jumper back and reboot. You should then be able to enter your BIOS and set it up how you want.

Of course, you will NEED your motherboard manual to do this as most motherboards don't mark the jumper on the board and you don't want to be switching the wrong one...

If you haven't got your motherboard manual your best bet will be to take the PC to a computer shop and see if they can do it for you.



Back Issues

\$15 each inc. postage and handling. Enquiries: ph: 02 9310 1433, fax: 02 9310 1315, subs@next.com.au

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PC PowerPlay

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HOW TO

- Cut or copy the form and post it with a cheque or money order, or your credit card details, to:

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- email your name and address with credit card details to: subs@next.com.au

If you're not sure about something, call us on 02 9310 1433 or email subs@next.com.au

GAMES GAMES GLORIOUS GAMES!

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(*Yawn, crick *) Come, gather round and offer some support and caffeine to your Oracle. What is wrong with the Oracle you ask? Tis nothing, just fatigue, tiredness and the elusive process of sleep. Why so tired? The release of so many top quality adventures of course. With Zork Grand Inquisitor, Broken Sword 2 and the Mega Monkey mode of Curse for Monkey Island, who has time for sleep? Let's just add some espresso to the fountain of knowledge instead and drink in all the caffeine laced wisdom we can.

On a side note: The Oracle has been receiving a lot of letters with profanity, threats and anger lately. Obviously this is caused by frustration of not being able to solve a game but statements such as "You had better answer this or I'll never buy the mag again" aren't a good start when asking someone for help. To the 8 year old whose letter contained more expletives than actual verbs, get help!

Here's a hint, these kind of letters won't get answered because they end up in the domain of the circular filing system. If you want your letter answered, take a deep breath, clear your mind of profanity and threats and calmly describe the problem your having in concise detail to assist me in answering your question.

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 2



Do you know any hints or cheats for the game "Heroes of Might and Magic 2"?

ANDRIE LONG
KINGSFORD, NSW



Well Andrie, I do actually know some cheats. Suppose you'd like me to print them too huh? Well, ok!

Heroes 2 type-in codes:

WARNING: Using any of these codes will cause you to be branded a cheater after you win.

Type in code:

911 = Makes you instantly win the current scenario.

1313 = Makes you lose the scenario.

32167 = Gives the selected hero 5 black dragons. (Reusable)

8675309 = Reveals the entire map.

Windows 95 Ultimate Cheat:

WARNING: If you use this cheat you will receive no score and be branded a cheater. This cheat gives you access to HOMM 2's debugger during single-player games only. This cheat allows you to view the entire map, have extra hero mobility, free spells, free resources, free creatures (selectable), and Secondary skills (selectable).

The following instructions are for the Windows 95 version of HOMM 2.

Make sure the game is not running.

From your Win 95 desktop click the Start Menu select Settings select Taskbar.

In the Taskbar Properties click Start Menu Programs click Advanced.

In the Start Menu Window double-click on



Programs then left-click on the Heroes of Might and Magic II group.

In the Heroes of Might and Magic II program group right-click on the Heroes of Might and Magic program icon (this should be the fourth icon down in a list of five) left-click on Properties.

In the Properties Window, select Shortcut. You should now see the location of HOMM 2 listed on the line named: Target. It should read:

<drive letter>:\<directory name>\Heroes2W.exe

left-click at the end of this line and type a Space followed by:

/NWC The Target line should now read:

<drive letter>:\<directory name>\Heroes2W.exe /NWC

At the bottom of the Properties Window, click Apply, then OK.

Close up any open windows and start the game from the Start Menu as you normally would. Once inside the game, a new item will be listed on the game's

Menu Bar - Debug.

To deactivate this cheat, repeat the process and delete /NWC

CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND



How do I get the cooking oil from the cabana boy in Curse of Monkey Island?

KATHY AND DEAN MOBBS
BRISBANE, QLD



Geez, with 2 of you asking the question, you'd think you could generate more than 16 words?

But, it's concise and to the point and so utterly deserving of an answer, which is as follows.

Curse of Monkey Island Normal Version.

From the "Barbery Coast". Put the lice on the comb the barber is using and see what happens. Sit down on the barber chair and let the haircut begin. Use the handle of the chair and take the paperweight from the hairstyling book. After the pirate vanished, use the handle until you can reach for the scissors. Take them and get out of the shop. Also take the jawbreaker on the floor.

With the scissors, you can work your way



All pics: Curse of Monkey Island



"very quiet patron". Take the Club card.

To get out of the chicken shop

I was stuck here myself. If you solved this in under 4 hours straight, the Oracle salutes you. Actually, if you have internet access, email oracle@next.com.au and tell me what clicked for you to figure it out... Pick up the tooth and put it in some already chewed up gum. Before you chew the gum, inhale some helium. Chew the gum that has the tooth in it and it creates a bubble that takes the tooth out the window. Exit and use the pie pan in the mud to find the tooth. Now is that a toughie or what??

TOONSTRUCK



HELP! I'm totally stuck in Toonstruck.

How do I get the wine for the big bad wolf and how do I get the missing

piece for the Churnatron in the barn. Your help is desperately needed.

ADRIAN SETTMACHER
PADBURY, W.A.



After you talk to the wolf, he wants wine. Head north from the pepper/nuts screen to get to the zanydu shuttle. Use the mouse with the right hand. Use the fertiliser on the mouse in hand. You can now enter the shuttle and go to zanydu.

Zanydu has three paths. The left to Jim's Gym & Fish Toilet, the middle to a vulture and right to the Wacme Store. Go right to the Wacme store. Stand in front of a revolving door, wait for the light above it to come on and click on the door to go in. Talk to the clerks. Ask for a demonstration of the boxing glove. Once the animations end, click on the STARS above the missing clerk. The Gift-o-matic can only be used if you can prove that you've bought something here. Now take the left path from central zanydu. Talk to the guard and look at the advert. You cant use the gym yet. Go back to the clock (outside Wacme). You need to set the time to 6 o'clock. It may take you a while, but persist. The guard will leave the fish toilet. (The toilet is blocked, so we need a plunger).

Return to the Irish pub in the town centre. Use the phone on the bar. You need to dial the colours from the advert outside



to Danjer Bay (look for a sign in the city. It's between the chicken and the lemonade shop). In the process, you will gain an ipecac flower. Upon arriving, take a look at the S-sign. Take all the stuff you can find inside the snake, and then use the ipecac flower with the pancake syrup and feed it to the snake.

In the quicksand, build a pea shooter with a thorn and a reed. Now assemble a balloon and the paperweight and blow the floating balloon. After it reaches the end position, shoot it with your pea shooter and use the live-saving plant to get out of the quicksand.

This accomplished, you arrive at Danjer Bay. If you try to get on the ship you are made to walk the plank. Since there is no way to get there undiscovered, Guybrush decides to go back to town and search for other possibilities.

Go to the chicken shop and show your reservation slip and take the club card from the table. Push the man at the table and take the bread knife from him. Now give the jawbreaker to captain Blondebeard. Offer him some chewing-gum. Remember the pin from the voodoo lady? Use it right here on the bubble-gum. Take the gold tooth. Now you're ready to get the map to blood island.

Go to the Brimstone Beach Club. The cabana boy will want to see your membership card, so show it to him. Before going to the beach, take three towels and put them in the ice bucket. Then use the wet towels with the cabana boy. Fetch the cooking oil and go on to the beach.

Mega Monkey tips.

Ok all you hard core adventurers, Here is some Mega Monkey advice. I the Oracle played Curse of Monkey Island in Mega Monkey Mode and what can I say but... Woah!

The Jawbreaker

The Jawbreaker does not just lie on the floor. You'll have to push Cutthroat Bill twice to get it.

The Club Card

See the biscuits in the corner? Take one and try to eat it. Not so yummy, put the maggots on the chicken in front of the



the gym. They are: Blue, Purple (Red&Blue together), Red, Orange (Red&yellow), yellow, Green (Blue&Yellow), Orange. You get through to the quiz line.

Answers to quiz:

Jim's fur: Blue

Fish tails on outhouse: Yellow

Warps fur besides white: Orange

Guards shoulders fish colours: Left-Yellow Right-Red

Woofs Collar: Green

Sign for Jim's in Zanydu: Blue

Sign for Wacme: Red

Plant Pots: Purple

Woofs fur: Purple

Mountains: Orange

Gym Floor: Red

When you get it right, go outside and pick up the hopping parcel. Aha! Proof of purchase in Wacmes. return to Wacme's and show the jumping beans to Woof. Now you can use the Gift-O-Matic. Use the start-stop button on it to get the magnet, mallet and glove. Now return to the barn and use the magnet on the haystack on the left. You get the missing churnatron piece, so use it on the gap in the machine. Take the butter. Fill the watering can with fertiliser again. Go to Jim's Gym.

Use the butter on the vaulting horse. Talk to Jim and ask him to demonstrate the fiery hoops. Ow! Use the Pumpatron to build up those muscles.

Ok, we have big muscles and big hammer, so let's go to the arcade and use the strenghtometer. (Use the big mallet from your inventory on the strengthometer, rather than talking to the cashier). Good, you've wrecked it and got the "wine".

ACE VENTURA



Can you help me in the game "Ace Ventura". I'm stuck in the Alaskan village and would like to know the order in which to put the wooden heads so I can win the trust of the village elders.

MICK WATTS

CANBERRA, A.C.T



You have to place the pieces into the form of a woman from the bottom to the top. Pretty easy really! :) When you complete it, don't forget to click on the "yellow snow", ooh icky!

CITY OF LOST CHILDREN



I have had the City of Lost Children for about five months and haven't advanced a bit. Could you please tell me how to rob the cashiers hut and whatever else that needs to be done.

SIMON

BELLBOWRIE, QLD.



Well Simon, we can help you with your little cashiers hut problem, but I don't have nearly enough room for the entire solution. Here goes then.

From the beginning of the game ask the double lady about your quest then go out and talk to the elderly person. Go to the pier and on your way pick up the brush from under the stairs.

At the pier pick up the metal bar from the crates on the left. Run from the pier to the lighthouse then throw the metal bar into control the panel. After the light goes down, hide behind the barrels. When the watchman enters the lighthouse, run back to his boat, Unlock the door and enter. Switch on the light. Open up the cashier and put a brush there. Take the money from the safe and exit.

SHIVERS 2 - HARVEST OF SOULS



I need help in "Shivers 2 - Harvest of Souls". I can't work out the book puzzle that opens the door to Max's cave. I also can't open the charity box that's in the church, nor the door in the library with the round lock. And I haven't got a clue what to do with the gauge and switch thingy that's in the Gas Station.

NAME & ADDRESS NOT SUPPLIED



Max's Cave. Tsk Tsk, this one is easy. You want to create the date of Norah's death backwards. 8/22/1992. So turn your sticks like this: First tile is 2, second and third are 9, fourth tile is 1, fifth and sixth tiles are 2, and the seventh is 8.

Church Donation Box:

The key for it is under the car at the Garage. The solution to the Library door puzzle is in this box.

The pieces to the library door can be found in: Lobby drawer, Market cash register, Church drawer, Bank safe.

Once you have all the pieces to the door, the bottom lock solution from the church donation box can be used. However, you can still open the door without it. Press the top left button, don't press the top right button, don't press the button under the top right button, press the next four buttons clockwise, leave the last button that's under the top left unpressed. Tada, open door.

Gas Station Chess Puzzle:

You can find the clue to this puzzle in the warehouse in a notebook. Label the board the way it's done in the notebook, A-H from left to right, and 1 to 8 from bottom to top. When you get your chess pieces, look at the bottom of the pieces, their positions are on marked on them. So this puzzle is easy, you just have to find the pieces. You can find them: Library drawer, Jail Cell table, Pearl's bedroom in the bird's mouth, Motel room next to yours in a drawer.

You must watch the video with the license plate in it for the clue to raise the car.

You have to set the pressure to 230. Since it's not marked on there, you have to click past it and go back till you're where it should be. Then turn around and click the handle to the right to raise the car. As soon as the handle depresses to the right, the car is raised. Look under it for the key to the donation box in the book.

ABSOLUTE ZERO CHEAT MODE

Set your system date prior to November 1995. Start a new game:
Type: **magazine review** (case-sensitive)

AG-1 LEVEL CODES

lvl. 6 = VectorLevel
lvl. 11 = JaguarLevel
lvl. 16 = SaabLevel
lvl. 21 = Lotus
lvl. 24 = AudiLevel
lvl. 25 = Last level

AGGRESSOR CHEAT CODES

To get all power ups and extra lives:
On the high score screen, enter **CLASSIFIED** as a name. The entry will change to **WRONG**.
Begin a new game

To get extra weapons:

Original Version

On the high score screen, enter **Terminator** (case-sensitive). Begin a new game

Macho Version

On the high score screen, enter **BloodSport** (case-sensitive). Begin a new game.

AHX-1 CHEAT MODE

Log on with the name Viper to enable cheat mode. You will be able select any mission.
Type in these codes during game play:

ALT+I = Invincibility
ALT+L = Full ammo
ALT+A = View all targets
ALT+Q = Real/arcade flight toggle
ALT+R = Disable damage mode
ALT+X = Crash Viper
ALT+K = Disable smoke trails
ALT+J = Show framerate

AIR SUPREMACY LEVEL CODES

1944 - **SCRAMBLE**
1991 - **STACCATO**
2150 - **EQUANIMITY**

AMOK CHEAT CODES

To start any mission:

Go to the option screen and highlight **PASS-WORD**

Press **ENTER**

In the space next to **PASSWORD** type **ZZZCYX**
A new menu item will called **LEVEL SELECT**, you can select from 9 levels

ARCHIPELAGOS CHEATS

To select a location. Finish the first two Archipelagos. Press **ENTER** to select another Archipelago.

Type **8421**. Press **ENTER** twice.

BACK TO BAGHDAD CHEATS

To revive a dead pilot:

- Go to the Control Center - Pilot Selection
- Select the pilot name from the pilot list
- Double-click on the pilot name.
- Double-click on the harness buckle on the picture of the pilot in the cockpit.
- Click on **OK** - screen will appear to freeze - wait a few seconds until your **HD** light stops.
- Click on **OK** again and you will return to the Control Center
- The pilot's status should now change from "deceased" to "pining for the fjords".

FIFA 98

Here's something cool to try in **FIFA 98**. After your team has scored and they are celebrating, press the following buttons repeatedly to hear special sounds from the crowd.

Shoot Button = Loud Drums

Lob/Long kick button = Horns

Pass Button = Crowd Cheers

Sprint Button = Normal Drums

FROGGER 3D CHEAT CODES

During gameplay, press **ESC** and type in these codes (including spaces):

NO MORE ROAD SPLATS = Infinite lives

SHOW ME MORE ZONES PLEASE = All zones

WAY TOO HARD FOR THE LIKES OF ME = All levels

G-POLICE CHEAT CODES

At the main menu type:

WOOWOO = Havoc Sirens

SUPACAM = Enemy FallCam

BENIHILL = Benny Hill cars

PANTALON = Secret missions in Training menu

DOOBIES = Infinite Shields *

MRTICKY = Infinite Weapons *

STATTOE = In-game info

Level Codes:		18	ANDYCROW
1	MADGAV	19	BIONIC
2	DOLMAN	20	TSLATER
3	SONAGAV	21	IAINTHOD
4	ACEDUF	22	JONRITZ
5	JOJOGUN	23	CLAIREC
6	WENSKI	24	STEVEBOT
7	SAEGGY	25	ANGUSF
8	MAZMAN	26	EVANLEC
9	DAZMAN	27	EDFIRE
10	DELUCS	28	STUBOMB
11	AND0000	29	THONBOY
12	KIMBCHS	30	JIMMAC
13	ANDYMAC	3	PUGGER
14	YERMAN	32	ROSSCO
15	OLLIEB	33	CAKEBOY
16	THEYOLK	34	NIKNAK
17	TONYMASH	35	SAGLORD

* You can't progress past the current mission when this code is enabled.

JET MOTO CHEAT CODES

To enable these codes, you must do the following:

Race the full circuit on Intermediate. You must place first. This will allow you to access four new tracks. Race the full circuit on Professional. You must place first again, and you will be able to access two more new tracks. Place first again on the full circuit on Professional. This will allow access to one final track.

Place first on the full circuit on Professional. Go to the title screen. It should say **CODES ENABLED**.

Type in the codes.

ZOWIEZOOM = Unlimited turbos

2XSTUNTS = Double stunt points

CONTORTIONIST = Agility

JETPACKSPECIAL = Rocket

ZIPPYNODRAG = No resistance

SWOOSHSKATE = Ice racing

SCREECHNOW = Air brakes

YAHOOLOOKIE = Show off camera

BRAINIACPLUS = Inverted camera



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Goodbye RPG, hello Quake 2!

A few issues back RPG's were highlighted and it would seem that a new generation of RPG's are heading our way. When I first started computing with an Atari 800 XL, it was RPG's and Adventure games that I craved. It took me six months to complete Qwestron, which was the first game I got. I later invested in a Commodore 64 and complete Qwestron II in three weeks. Grabbed copies of all the Bard's Tales, numerous others both Fantasy and in Sci-Fi settings. I could never have enough. Many I never finished, this was usually because your opposition would slaughter you prematurely. You know, the old walking down the street with a party of first level characters and you meet a group of 60 Red dragons who promptly destroy you. Well maybe not to this extreme, but your party would get massacred and you'd have to start again.

These days First-Person-Actions are my favourite. I enjoy a wide range of games but Doom-clones are what I enjoy most. When I first got Quake, I'd had Duke 3D for a while. I played Quake straight through, twice. But wasn't all that impressed, it was neat, but there were only four weapons (the other three just being powered-up versions of the first three) not that many creatures and the colours were a bit dull. I'm not saying I didn't appreciate the total 3D environment or what the game offered then, but overall I preferred Duke 3D. Later on

PCPP showed me what else WE could do with Quake and my opinion changed dramatically.

What's most important in a First Person action game? The guns. Personally this is where it's all at, your weapons and how they pulverize your opponents. Guns should look good, they should make a pretty effect when fired and they should eliminate the opposition in creative and visual ways. Quake's weapons just... didn't, really. This is my one complaint against Duke 3D too, Duke's higher-end weapons were a bit lame. The Tripbombs were virtually useless, the Shrinkray and Freezethrower I found little better. The Destroyer was the only one I found any use for. I have developed a bit more appreciation for the Freezethrower since then, but none tend to be as effective against your more powerful opponents than the RPG.

Need some ideals for some fun guns - play Crusader: No Regret. Liquify, Crystalfy, Broil, cause to explode messily, turn inside out, etc.

Creatures are also important. The leaping Fiend, oh mamma what fun these bastards are. The WereJaguars in Hexen II, you just can't kill them fast enough. Enemies should be challenging, but not all requiring 163 shots to kill, they should be ferocious and a bit terrifying. Basically you should really want to kill more of them fast.

Just picked up Quake 2 and yep, it's the best FPA ever. A great weapon selection, the BFG is back!!!! This is it, the winner of the 98 PC PowerPlay G.O.T.Y. Someone will have to come up with something unbelievably fantastic to take the glory away from the lads at Id.

Benjamin Bate

We have an uncomfortable feeling you may be onto something re. the '98 G.O.T.Y. And it's only March! Still, count on there being some truly amazing games this year.

The Tomb 2 Demo

I enjoy your PC PowerPlay magazine a lot. I was aware that the Tomb Raider 2 demo was given an accidental time expiry date by the producer and that PC PowerPlay had provided steps of getting into it, but I decided to

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Publishers just don't care

It seems that nobody on the production side of games these days has a better reason for not including manuals than dollars. Well, how fortunate we are that an economic rationale has to be applied to all aspects of our lives, especially the escapism which is computer games. I'm just chuffed. For a solution try this on: game companies produce a slip insert to the CD case, and call it a guide, collect their extra \$3.50 per unit and scrooge all the way to the bank (as per usual). But it would also appease the little (poor and/or literate) people to have a downloadable manual which is not an "ingame online" resource; rather a complete manual with diagrams, updates, tables, detailed explanations, and all the rest. Game producers already have web sites that supply advertising and demos for these products, and perhaps by making a full manual in a few formats (doc, rtf, html, txt) that we can print at home, they will spend a little of their hard earner money on an extra page which has all we desire. I doubt it will happen, but then I doubted that any response would have come from anyone in the game industry. They'll cry that it will increase or promote piracy. Well my corporate friends, perhaps a 30 page manual which has all the answers will increase the chance that people will not pirate software. Ever tried playing Master of Orion or the Mechwarrior games without reading the manuals?

Andrew Breese

Hey, game publishers, Andrew's letter is just one of the many we get along a similar vein each month. Your profiteering arrogance is really starting to piss people off. Do you think it's all a little deal and that gamers (your customers, your damn livelihood!) are undiscerning and ignorant? Do you think their standards are so low that they'll fork out \$90 for any old crap, as long as you make the box pretty? Wake up! This is an issue. Most gamers remember the good old days when manuals were useful, of substance, and often, a good read in their own right. The marketing graduates who seem to be making these decisions obviously lied about their knowledge of games in the interview, or experience just isn't important to you, their employer. The average music CD slip is now more comprehensive than the average game "manual", but a music CD is less than \$30, and in the light of today's deluge of substandard games, offer a better value way to pass the time.

So what are you going to do about it? We'll publish the best pathetic excuse a game publisher sends us (it'll happen), while we live in hope that one will make a statement of intention to actually lift their game.

just change the month and see if it worked, when an impolite message popped up saying "The Tomb Raider 2 demo has expired. Are you stupid or something", this could certainly not be the doing of MS Windows so I send you this message to ask if it was the doing of your CD demo programmers, if so, I found it very offending. First to find this impolite message, and then to find I needed to take steps every time I wanted to play.

If this is not the doing of your programmers I'll write a letter to Microsoft and I'm sorry for

your time.

Rob

That happy little message came courtesy of the friendly people at Eidos, the developers' of the game. We weren't aware of it at the time of going to press, as it was only through the steps you took that it appeared. Naturally, we, and every other games mag who also carried the demo, were just a bit embarrassed. Together with the date problem it was all pretty disappointing. We apologize to all that were affected by the dodgy Tomb 2 demo. We'd also like to take this opportunity to blame Eidos.

Lara sucks!

Eidos will kill Lara. They are attempting to hype her up to superstar status via money and promotion rather than a quality product. Did you know about the Lara movie? Yes, they're making one and I bet they really stuff it. Why? Money. They are making the movie for money and money only, much like the Judge Dredd movie was ruined. They've got a comic lined up, and an action figure!! An animated series too! Lara is really only well-known, not famous. Why? The gaming community is the only group of people to really know what Lara is. They know through her roots of existence, Tomb Raider. Other people know about Lara through promotion and the media reports of a cyber-sex symbol. For this reason, I think that Lara will flop if converted to a live action movie. Even if the movie isn't too bad, the main audience is going to be fans of the Tomb Raider games. So one would expect that the people at Eidos would try and keep the excitement of Lara to gamers high. By creating a game that uses the original engine only very slightly enhanced and still uses the same Lara? By adding some new but fairly useless moves like jump-reverse? No, I don't think so. By adding a crappy storyline and ultimately boring levels? No, I don't think so. How then would they keep the gaming community excited by Lara? How about creating a new game engine, using some excellent weaponry to start with (who was impressed by the grenade launcher?), creating some absolutely superb levels (the original had a FEW), having excellent AI (like in Jedi Knight where enemies surround you and take cover, and aren't always alert), having impressive but PRACTICAL moves for Lara, and creating a game that has replayability, which was the biggest fault in the original. Then that should work. But

why would Eidos spend more money doing these things when they can rehash the original and use the originals' popularity? Money, I suppose. This is all fairly obvious to most people, but then their will be people who don't see it the same way. This is my view.

Rodney Pearce

Lara rules!

I was disappointed that Tomb Raider was not mentioned in the G.O.T.Y awards. Tomb Raider, in my point of view could be said to be one of the best and cleverly mar-

keted games of all time. It has killer gameplay, brilliant level design, jaw dropping graphics and one of the most amazing game characters to date. Those magnificent breasts could sell anything. For example, after finishing Tomb Raider I was not planning on buying Tomb Raider 2, then one day I walked into the shop and saw it on the shelf with cute Lara on the box, and I couldn't take my eyes off of it. I had to have it. By the way TR2 is also a f#@sing excellent game.

Also shame on you for picking on Bill Shatner's classic way of acting.

It's not acting, it's an art form!

Adam Camilleri

Hi Eidos! We know you're reading this... Listen up, there's gold in them thar letters. Firstly, vigorously apply the Birchwood of Penance for the Tomb 2 demo "problem". Naughty naughty! Next, apply said



Just one of the cute little huggable creatures from Starcraft





Birchwood to the programming team that developed the "sequel" and speaketh to them the following words: "Try a little harder next time please". Finally, please send Mr Camilleri one of those life-size Lara promotional cardboard standees, we'll send him a copy of Lemmings to give him a better understanding of "gameplay". Thanks!

Gratuitous praise

How desperate has my life become? I find myself anxiously awaiting your magazine every month. I get agitated when it isn't out on the first of the month and elated if, like a few occasions, it turns up early - although this just puts next month's further away.

I have been with you from the beginning. The things I have watched you overcome... Like the famous month you took off without telling anybody! Even through all of this I have persevered and today you are close to raw and pure excellence. To put my dedication in perspective, I sold my perfectly acceptably performing Pentium 166 about seven months ago (for \$600 - what the hell was I thinking?!?) and since have craved the nearness I require to a PC - I work with them but it's just not the same. I still don't have one and the withdrawal pains get worse by day... what was I trying to say? That's it! Even through my seven month forced holiday from the land of computer gaming (a place I long to return to), I have bought your magazine every month and have actually been more obsessed than usual. What I am trying to say is keep up the good work and hurry up with that next issue.

Ben Harris

Thanks Ben, you're a top bloke.

Killing the fun

Why do games come with cheat codes? What is the point of it all? I don't see why a player would rather cheat than play a challenging game. All cheat codes do is wreck the game, the game ends up being neither fun or hard. What is the good if no one can kill you in Doom, or if you don't run out of ammo in Quake?

I would also like to agree with Rod Campbell, who's letter was in issue 15. If you don't enjoy a game don't play it, or just put it out of your mind. Who would listen if someone said that Doom is a crap game and has crap graphics? Well dur, it has crap graphics but people may like the game for what it is, not what type of graphics it has. It was good in '95 and some people may still like it.

David Adams

Cheat codes are an insidious disease which have spread to the PC via, like most diseases, a lower life form - the console. There's an easy way to deal with it, just apply the bad-game philosophy you mentioned and ignore them completely. Unless you're really stuck of course...

How to be a beta tester

I'm writing to ask some questions about beta testing. Currently I'm studying at Uni and I want to enter the games industry when I graduate. I figure beta testing games would be great experience, but most large companies do it inhouse, or don't offer placements outside the US. I've visited some Australia games company sites and sent numerous emails, but since you guys have your finger on the pulse I wonder if you could offer some additional information. Ideally, I'd like to be a games tester, but hey, dreams can come true, right? Anyway, if you could help me out I'd be grateful. Keep up the good work.

Robert

Hey Rob, more and more developers are turning to the public for their beta testing. By emailing and expressing interest you're doing the best thing you can. Careful not to overdo it and become a pest though... Also watch the news-groups for announcements and much excited talk about forthcoming beta tests. Keep your finger on the pulse, and when a new title is imminent, contact the developers and offer your services. Don't tell them you are desperate/dream come true etc., but instead impress upon them your incredible analytical skills, vast games history, enormous experience with that particular genre and that you possess unbelievable patience.

FREAK of the month

Freak File: Rob Irwin

Age: 22

Profession: Public Relations Consultant

Likes: Anna, Star Wars, bevvy's, sleeping, the guitar, Anna, home recording, rainy days, experimental cooking and Anna

Dislikes: When someone coughs on a train, and three other people have to cough too, as if to say, "I'm just as sick as you!" What is that? Some kind of competition?

Fav Sport: Cricket, soccer and rally driving

Fav Food: Seafood

Fav Drink: Baileys, Malibu and milk, or if I have to be macho, Grolsch lager

Fav TV: Red Dwarf, The X-Files and The Simpsons

Fav Music: The Smiths, Blur, Elastica, Sleeper, U2, Lemonheads, Suede, Nick Cave, Chris Isaak, REM, The Pixies, Cowboy Junkies, Juliana Hatfield, Veruca Salt and The Beatles

Fav Quote: "Taste is the enemy of art" - Bono

Heroes/Idols: Paul McCartney, (I'm sick to death of hearing how avant garde John Lennon was, when Paul did it all first; go and read about it), James Dean, Spike Milligan and Morrissey

3 Fav Games of All-time: Command and Conquer, Wings and Rockstar Ate My Hamster

Fav Multiplayer Game: Age of Empires or X-Wing Versus Tie Fighter

Online/ICQ nickname: Blur

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/3845>

Longest Time Spent on What Game: 8 hrs on Command and Conquer (the same day I bought it)

Computer History: 11 years through Commodore 64, Amiga 500, Amiga 2000, Pentium 75 and my current system

Current System Specs: P166 MMX, 32 Meg RAM, 2.1 Gig HD, Trio64V2 2Mb Vid Card, Sound Blaster 16 Sound Card, Generic 24xCD-ROM, Sony CDU928E 8x/2x CD-R, 33.6 Modem, Win 95, Reinforced MACASE Medium Tower, AcerView 34T 14 inch Monitor, Generic Keyboard, Logitech Wingman Joystick, Canon BJ-200 Printer, Pye Midi System, (with awesome-sounding speakers stashed under my desk).

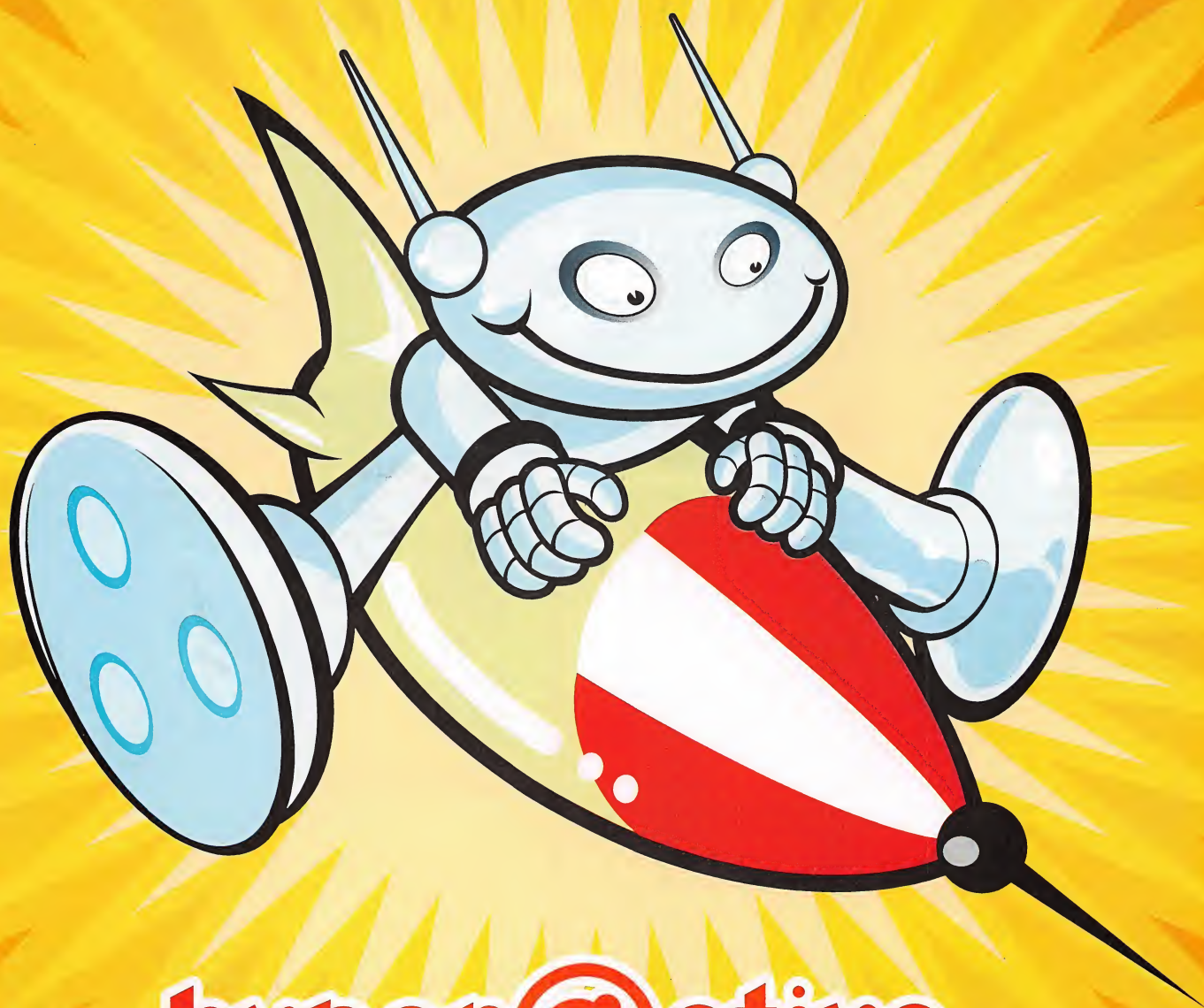
Rob's Rant

When I told someone that I was writing a Freak of the Month entry for PC PowerPlay, they asked me if it was, "Some kind of Generation X thing, or something?". It must seem to them that printing your personal details in a magazine, and happily referring to yourself as a Freak is something exclusive to my age group. Hmmm. After taking a moment to refute the fact that Generation X even exists I sat down with a bevvy and began to ponder life, the universe and everything. The following is a brief overview of what I discovered. I particularly like the fact that I had the opportunity to grow-up with computers from something as painfully stupid as the Commodore Vic-20, [my cousin had one] to something like the Pentium II-300Mhz, [my cousin now has one of these] because it makes you appreciate them a lot more. However, whilst computers may have taken their time to evolve, other essentials in a 20th Century boy's life have not.

Back in 1993, I got on the Internet through my University, and it totally blew me away. I'd try and explain to people how I'd been chatting in real-time to some people in California, or just sent an e-mail, and they'd shake their head at me, and turn away as if I was insane. Nowadays, you see the ubiquitous URL on everything from the TV you watch, to the food you eat, to the clothes you wear. It's enough to do your head in. Even TV presenters intone their Web address as if it's some kind of sacred text. Hell, when I started on the Internet, the uni didn't even have a Web browser! [Oh, I tell a lie, we had Mosaic, which you've probably never even heard of!] Now everyone's at it. It's so bizarre. So after this brief, fractured moment of navel-gazing, the question begs, what does the future hold? The simple answer is, I really don't know, but it's going to be an amazing trip getting there.



Why do all PCPP FOTM's let their grandmothers choose their curtains? In keeping with what we've come to expect from FOTM's, Rob's a Star Wars fan/freak. How original.



hyper@ctive

<http://hyperactive.com.au>

GAMES ONLINE

ARCHON

By Anne Westfall, Jon Freeman and Paul Reiche III. (may they be immortalised)

Developer: Electronic Arts

Archon was originally incarnated on the good old, beloved, Commodore 64. It was vastly different from the majority of games available at the time, and even most games available now, in that it combined the strategic, cerebral elements of chess with thumb twitching, adrenaline action.

It has a very cool Sword & Sorcery theme, instead of the stuffy Kings and Bishops and all that crap. The basic idea is to move your players strategically, but when two players collide, instead of the usual instant win the game board expands into a killing field where they fight to the death with their own unique weapons to gain possession of the square. The field is peppered with obstacles, which block projectiles, however they rapidly melt away, as well as materialising all over the field. They provide handy cover, but if you travel through them while they are in a transitional stage, you are slowed for a lethal microsecond, during which the enemy will almost certainly deliver a winning blow. Similarly if you run into the obstacles you bounce back, probably into the field of fire.

It has similarities to chess, by way of a front-line cannon-fodder crew of simple pawn-like characters, backed up by pairs of meatier, more dangerous hombies, who protect the leader, or Saddam Hussein style spiritual doyen of the force. Although: one mirrored pair from each side is not symmetrical, being the four wildcard characters in the deck who have strange, unusual powers. It also differs from chess in that the two teams in battle are not equally matched, rather each has differing strengths and weaknesses, which appeal to differing styles of play. It's the classic stand off of Good vs Evil, or Light vs Dark, in this case.

The characters have a definite aura of "coolness" about them.



They animate nicely, (given the nature of gaming when it was released) and stalk with a purposeful air across the deck. They each have their own characteristic sound effects, generated when they travel. The Basilisk, for example, makes a deep, pulsing buzz as it approaches the enemy, being one of the most powerful creatures in the game. Naturally, the Wizard and Sorceress have the most destructive projectiles (being lightning bolts), but the four singular "tricky" odd-couple monsters must be mastered to pose any resistance to a seasoned player. The Light side has the Phoenix, who flies at high speed, and attacks by way of becoming a magical ball of flame which takes about a second to expand. The other wildcard in the Light side hand is the Djinni, who travels fast and takes an enormous amount of punishment, even though his air-disruption attack only does moderate damage. As for the Dark side, the classic Dragon makes an appearance, sending extremely fast, deathly-hard-hitting fireballs across the deck, but he only hovers at a medium speed. The other half of the Dark side enigma is the Shapeshifter. An amorphous cloud of gas whilst not in combat, the Shapeshifter assumes

the form of his adversary, mirroring their speed and attack method, but the damage he delivers and the life points he begins with are entirely dependent on the colour of the square the challenge began upon.

There is a designed balance between the characters. Each has a limitation of move-

ment, although some can fly, which means they can travel over any formation of characters to get where they are going. They are almost universally armed with projectile weapons, apart from the club-brandishing Goblins and the sword-wielding Knights (both being the cannon fodder classes), the Phoenix and also the Banshees, who emit a field of damaging ultrasound.

It's a highly absorbing experience. The most brilliant tactician can be thwarted by the most reflexive player, on the other hand the thinking player will probably win out by stacking the odds in their favour.

It's a game for everybody. The cerebral people with zero motor skills are challenged to improve, while the thumb-twitching meatheads actually have to concentrate to avoid disadvantaging themselves.

It's worth checking out. If you're interested, you can download a C64 emulator and have Archon on your Pentium(!), as well as a score of other classics. Check these out:

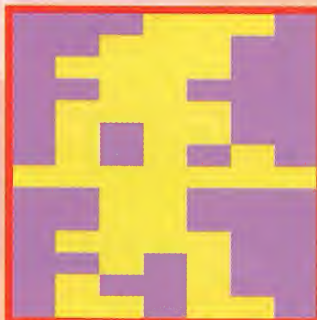
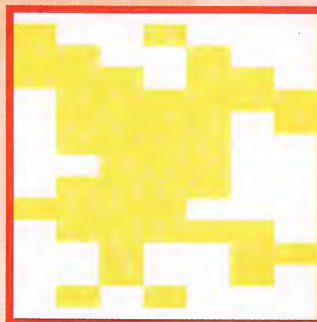
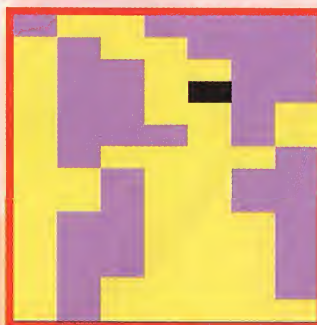
C-64 emulators:

• <http://www.ozemail.com.au:80/%7Egvincent>

• <http://www.uni-mainz.de/~baueco02/FRMain.html>

• <http://stekt.oulu.fi/~jopi/vice.html>

Hendry Saunders



(above) some of the units: Wizard, Phoenix & Valkyrie. And not a polygon in sight!

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